

FOUR
DISCOURSES

ON THE

Four Last Things;

VIZ.

DEATH, || HEAVEN,
J U D G- A N D
M E N T, || H E L L.

By the Right Reverend Father in God,
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A NEW EDITION Corrected.

L O N D O N;

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M.DCC.LIII.





TO THE
READER.

IT being of the greatest importance to every man, to lead a holy life in this world, as that on which his eternal well-being in the next does chiefly depend; it highly becomes all men very seriously and often to think on those things, which will in all probability, be very instrumental in engaging them heartily to the practice of it.

SUCH, I think would be the frequent consideration of the Four Last Things, as they are commonly called, DEATH, JUDGMENT, HEAVEN, and HELL; all very serious and important subjects.

AND for that end, I have endeavour-
ed, in as plain and affecting a manner
as I could, to draw up a discourse upon
each of them; hoping, that what I
have said may be of some benefit, to
such as shall be willing to give them-
selves time to read and consider them,
towards persuading them to have these
important subjects frequently in their
thoughts, and to direct their lives ac-
cordingly.

I pray GOD give a blessing to my
endeavours, and prosper them to the
good end designed by them.





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A
DISCOURSE
UPON
DEATH.

What brought Death at first into the world, and what is meant by it.

TH E way whereby Death came first into the world, was our first parent *Adam's* transgression of the law of *GOD*, by eating of the forbidden fruit; concerning which, *GOD* commanded the man, saying, *Of every tree of the garden thou mayst freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and*
B *evil,*

2 *A Discourse upon Death.*

evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die,
Gen. ii. 16, 17.

BUT notwithstanding this solemn prohibition, *the woman*, being beguiled by *the serpent*, did eat thereof: and she tempted her husband to do so likewise, *Genesis* iii. 12, 13. whereby they drew upon themselves, and all their posterity, the punishment which God had threatned to the eating of it, *viz.* Death. In consequence whereof they, and all mankind, who descended from them, became mortal; liable to a separation of their soul from their body. For as of these two parts united doth every living man consist; the body being the outward tabernacle, and the soul the inward inhabitant of it: so when the body, by sickness, old age, or any outward violence, is become unfit to be any longer the habitation of the soul, the soul immediately departs, and separates itself from it: from which separation ensues what we call Death. For by this means the body, being parted from the soul, becomes a lump of lifeless clay and dirt, fit only to return to the earth from whence it was at first

first taken. So says Solomon, Eccles. xii. 7. *Then, that is, at Death, the dust shall return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*

THE plain and evident sense of which words is this; that whereas man consists of two parts, a body and a soul, the condition of these two, when a man dies, will be very different. For the body having been at first taken out of the dust of the earth, is of a corruptible constitution, and shall therefore go back into the earth again, and moulder into dust; but the soul, as it is of another and more excellent original (created indeed in the image and after the likeness of God himself: and by him inspired immediately into the body) shall not perish with the body, but return unto that God from whom it came; in whose hands it shall continue alive safe and inviolable, according to the author of the book of wisdom, chap. iii. 1. *The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them.*

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Concerning the state of the soul after its separation from the body.

HOW it fares with the soul upon its separation from the body no man alive can tell particularly, nor after what manner it then acts; since God has not been pleased any where to reveal it to us. This only we know, that the soul continues still a living soul, after its separation, and will so continue for ever; God having made it and designed it to be immortal; able to understand, and think, and reason, and remember, and converse with other spirits like itself; and with them to enjoy happiness, or endure misery to all eternity, according as it shall have behaved itself well or ill in this world.

Now when the soul is thus separated from the body, and leaves this world of corporeal things; in that moment, all our concerns in this world are perfectly at an end. Should we, while we continued here, have been the happiest persons that ever the sun shone on, having immense riches in possession, and being furnished with the greatest plenty of delights on every side;

so

so that we were the envy of all that beheld us; yet all this must be parted with and left behind us, when God removes us out of this world by Death; *for we can carry nothing away with us to our grave, neither shall our pomp follow us*, Psalm xlix. 17. We must then bid an eternal farewell to them all. Thenceforth our eyes shall never more behold the glories of this world; nor shall we have any further knowledge of the pleasures of it.

If we have suffered ourselves to be tempted to sin by any of them; in that case indeed the remembrance of them will be bitter to the soul, as long as it subsists, unless we have truly repented of it while we lived; for we shall never return into this world again, to have any further enjoyment or satisfaction in the things of it: nor will there be any room for repentance in the next world, *for as the tree falls, so it shall lie*, Eccles. xi. 3. Being once separated from the things of this world by Death, we must remain so, till the general resurrection of our bodies, at the end of the world.

Now Death implying, as we see, a separation of the soul from the body, after

which it is impossible for us to have any further perception of any thing in this world (since it is the soul only that thinks and perceives, and not the body) and yet this separation must be undergone, sooner or later, by every man living, when it shall please God to remove us out of this world: (he having made it a general rule for all mankind, of whatsoever degree or condition they be, as the apostle assures us, *Heb. ix. 27. It is appointed unto men once to die.*) This, I say, suggests to us many things of great moment, which it highly concerns every man frequently to think of, and meditate upon, while he has time and opportunity for it; that is, while it pleases God to continue him in this world, with his soul and body united together. As,

That the soul does not sleep during its separation.

FIRST, we ought to consider, that when this separation happens, of the soul from the body, it is the body only that, properly

properly speaking, dies, and becomes a lifeless lump of clay, and not the soul; for that does not cease to live, when it is separated from the body: but being of a spiritual and immortal nature (quite different from the body) that probably becomes more lively, active, and sensible, than ever it was before, while it was clogged with the body; and more perceptible of happiness or misery, and will continue to be so for ever.

It cannot indeed be denied, but that some, who have granted the soul of man to be a distinct substance from his body, and to subsist after the Death thereof, have yet asserted, that the soul, in the state of separation, is as it were in a sleep or lethargy, in a state of insensibility; having no perception at all, either of joy or sorrow, happiness or misery; an opinion that seems not only unreasonable, but altogether inconsistent with itself. For how can the soul subsist and remain a soul without sense and perception? since perception must be an essential property of the soul: and therefore to say an insensible soul, seems a contradiction in terms. After what manner, and in what way the soul perceives, when

out of the body, we cannot tell, no more than we can explain how it perceives, while it is in the body. But that the soul, in that state of separation, hath a perception of things, and by that perception is either happy or miserable, and so not asleep, is ascertained to us by divine revelation.

THIS extravagant opinion of the sleep of the soul, was no doubt founded upon the frequent resemblance that is made in scripture of Death to Sleep; but this metaphor in the holy writings is only applied to the body's resting in the grave, in order to be awakened, as out of sleep, at the resurrection; as may appear by consulting *Dan. xii. 2. Matt. xxvii. 52. 1 Cor. xv. 20.* and some other places, in which it is used with express reference to the body. But sleep, applied to the soul, is utterly inconsistent with several passages of scripture, which plainly suppose the contrary.

THUS our Saviour himself, who *knew all things*, and therefore most certainly knew the true state of departed souls, and whether they were then happy or miserable; has given us a lively description of both
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those states, in the parable of the rich man and the beggar, St *Luke* xvi. 22, &c. This some may be apt to say, is but a parable: and therefore nothing can be positively concluded from it. But granting it to be but a parable, and that all things in a parable are not argumentative, yet all divines agree that the main scope and intendment of it is so: and allow it as a thing certain, that it was our Saviour's design in this parable, to shew what becomes of the souls of good and bad men after Death. The one he represents as very happy, and the other as very miserable, in the intermediate state between Death and the resurrection: and thereby plainly intimates, that the souls of both of them were not asleep and insensible, during that state.

AND again, his promise to the penitent thief, that was crucified with him, while he was hanging on the cross, *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise*, could have no other meaning than this, that he should presently after his Death, enter with him into that place of ease and joy, which the souls of the righteous inhabit, St *Luke* xxiii. 42, 43. But now why should our Saviour have made him

him this promise, if his soul had been incapable of the joys and felicities of a place, that deserves to be called paradise, and he had been to fall into a deep sleep, as soon as he came thither: and so lose the sense or faculty of perceiving and enjoying the pleasures of it?

MOREOVER, as *St Paul* himself was caught up, not only into heaven, but into paradise likewise, he must for certain be able to give us an account of the state and condition of the souls dwelling there; now he tells us, ‘It was so far from being a
 ‘ place of darkness and obscurity, silence
 ‘ and oblivion, where its inhabitants are all
 ‘ in a profound sleep, that, on the contrary,
 ‘ it is a most glorious place of life and
 ‘ glory, and that he himself there heard
 ‘ *unspeakable words*, which it is not lawful
 ‘ or possible for a *man* to utter, 2 Cor.
 ‘ xii. 4.’ From his own knowledge therefore and experience of the place, he also tells the *Philippians*, *That he was in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which was far better; though to abide in the flesh was more needful for them*, Phil. i. 23, 24. But how could he think

it

A Discourse upon Death. 11

it to be so much better to depart from the body, than to remain in it, if upon his departure he was to be deprived of all sense, and sink into a lethargy, or go into a land where all things are forgotten.

AND therefore we may safely conclude, from all these places, that the souls of men do not only subsist, after they are separated from their bodies, but also that they are sensible of pleasure or pain, of joy or sorrow, in that separate state. The wicked being tormented at present with a piercing remorse of conscience, and expecting a far more dreadful vengeance to befall them hereafter : and the good, on the other hand, being refreshed with the peace of a good conscience, with divine consolations, and moreover joyfully waiting for a greater happiness at the resurrection.

AND again, the same apostle says in another place, *While we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, and we are confident therefore, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord,* 2 Cor. v. 6, 8. which he could not have said, if he had thought that the souls of the faithful, during the interval between

tween Death and the resurrection, were in a profound sleep, and void of all sense and perception.

MOREOVER, from these and many more passages of the holy scriptures; as, where it is said, that our Saviour, at the point of Death, committed his human soul to God, saying, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*, St Luke xxiii. 46. and St Stephen, when he was expiring, committed, in like manner, his soul to Christ himself, now exalted to *the right hand of the majesty on high*; saying, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*, Acts vii. 59. And when the author of the epistle to the *Hebrews* tells us, that by virtue of the Catholic communion, Christians are not only joined to an innumerable company of *angels*, but to the society likewise of the *spirits of just men made perfect*: when, I say, we meet with these, and many such passages as these in the New Testament, we cannot but conclude, that the doctrine of the immortality of man's soul, and its independence on the body, and subsistence after its separation from it, and its capacity, during that separation, of happiness or misery, is the doctrine of Christ and his apostles.

AND

‘AND accordingly, we may observe, that the saints of old lived and died, in full assurance of the truth of this doctrine. Hence it was, that the apostolical bishop and martyr, St *Polycarp*, when brought to the stake to be burned, begins his prayer thus; “O thou G O D of the whole race of righteous men, who live before thee:” and then mentioning several martyrs in particular, presently adds, “Among these may I be received before thee this day!”

‘AND moreover, this doctrine was universally maintained by the church of Christ afterwards. In most of her ancient Liturgies, she makes publick profession of it: and in those very Liturgies, the place and receptacle of the spirits of just men deceased, is usually stiled, “The region of the living; the region of the godly; and the bosom of *Abraham, Isaac,* and *Jacob*; and of all those that have pleased God, and obeyed his will, from the beginning of the world.”

AND as the souls of good men, while separated from their bodies, were believed
to

to be capable of happiness; so were the souls of evil men, immediately upon their separation, believed to be capable of misery. Though neither the happiness of the one, nor the misery of the other, was imagined to be then so great, as it shall be after the resurrection, when the souls and bodies of all men are to be united together again.

The vast alteration which shall be produced upon the separation.

SECONDLY, since when we die, we must part with our bodies, which are one part of our present composition; and by the help of which (while they continue united with our souls) we see and converse with men like ourselves, and with the things of this world; we ought to consider, that as soon as they are separated the one from the other, this must needs produce a vast alteration of us from what we were before. We enter then upon a new state of being, which,

which, what it will be, as to the particulars of it, as I said before, we can now form no notion at all. When we depart hence into the world of spirits, which we immediately do, upon the removal of this gross covering of flesh; the scene of things, which will then open to us, will all be new and exceedingly surprizing. But yet as new as it will then appear to us, this one thing we know, and are assured of beforehand, that if we will but take care to lead a holy and religious life in this world, in obedience to those righteous commands, which God and our Saviour have given us to be the rule of our conduct here, so as to die in the Lord, we shall have no reason to be grieved and sorry at the change, which we shall find in our new state: but on the contrary, the greatest reason to be glad, and to thank God for our deliverance from this gloomy, troublesome, and dangerous scene of things, into one bright and glorious, and safe, without all manner of fear or molestation, where we shall not only *rest from our labours*, but from that time begin to *rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*, 1 Pet. i. 8. being fully satisfied with that happiness we shall

shall there experience in our new habitation, and shall never once wish to return into this life again.

The great happiness which good men shall experience upon the separation.

WE shall then indeed be separated from all the enjoyments of this life, in which we once took so much pleasure; and from all our dear relations and friends, whom we loved as our own souls, and could not, without the greatest uneasiness, and a sorrow that pierced us to the very heart, bear even the least thought of parting from them; and going we knew not whither, into strange and unknown places, and into company as strange and unknown as they are. But we shall soon meet there with what will allay all our fears, and cheer our souls, when we are only to go to that place of separate spirits, where our dear Saviour has been before us, and has secured our passage to it, and will preserve us in safety, till the restitution of
all

all things: ' A place, wherever it is, of rest; and that not a stupid and insensible rest, but a rest attended with a lively perception of far greater joys and delights, than any which this whole world can afford: a place, of the best society and company; where all those holy souls, which have ever been in the world from the beginning of it, the holy Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, and Confessors, and the spirits of all just men now made perfect, whom before we have heard of with admiration, and whose examples we have endeavoured to imitate; are all now gathered together, familiarly conversing with one another, and congratulating one another on their safe escape from the dangers of the late world, and on the joys they are now possessed of, and waiting for their Lord's return from heaven, and the glories of their own resurrection: a place, that is frequented by the angels of God, which the Son of God himself visits and illustrates with the rays of his glory: a place, where there shall be no wicked men to corrupt or offend

‘ us, no devils to tempt us, no sinful flesh
‘ to betray us: a place, full of security,
‘ where we shall be out of all possible dan-
‘ ger of being undone and miserable for-
‘ ever: a place, from whence all sorrow
‘ (because all sin) is banished, where our
‘ enjoyments shall be suited to our enlarged
‘ faculties, and every thing that can in-
‘ crease the pleasure of our separate souls
‘ shall be presented before them, and every
‘ pleasure and joy continually increased by
‘ the certain expectation of greater joys still
‘ to come hereafter, when our souls and
‘ bodies, those once dear partners, but se-
‘ parated by Death, shall be re-united at
‘ the resurrection.’ If we have been so
wise as to fear God, and keep his com-
mandments, while we lived in this world,
we have nothing to fear when Death comes
to remove us out of it. For thus happy,
and ten thousand times more so than we
can now imagine or conceive, will our
souls begin to be, as soon as they are enter-
ed into the invisible world of spirits.

THIS is therefore matter of abundant
consolation to all good men, when Death
approacheth

approacheth them, that they shall not stay for their happiness, till their resurrection at the last day. They shall not indeed have their perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul till that time comes; but they are sure of being in joy and felicity in the mean time. For they shall immediately after Death be put into possession of a celestial paradise; and there rejoice in the certain expectation of a crown of glory that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them; and to be bestowed on them at the day of recompence, at the end of the world.

INDEED, if good men, when they *had fought the good fight, and had finished their course*; were to wait some thousands of years for a recompence to be made them; were they, when they die, to pass through a long state of oblivion and inactivity, before they could reap any advantage for all their diligence and labour in God's service here; were they to have no perception of comfort till the last day; if darkness were to overshadow them, till the light of Christ's glorious appearance at the resurrection came upon them: This might reasonably make

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them

them unwilling to die, and desirous to continue longer in this world, where there is some comfort, some enjoyment of Christ, though imperfect. But when they are assured by God's holy word, that such as *die in the Lord*, do not only *rest from all their labours here*, but have *the reward of their works immediately following them*, Rev. xiv. 13. That pious souls are no sooner delivered from the burden of the flesh, but they find themselves with God, and their Saviour in paradise. This may very well take from them all fears of dying, nay, make them resigned and willing to die, when God calls them to it, and be even very desirous to depart, and be with Jesus Christ; which is far better than to live here, in this vain, and troublesome, and dangerous world: and moreover engage them *to be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as they know that their labour shall so soon, and so suddenly, not be in vain in the Lord*, 1 Cor. xv. 58.

‘ For then will be fulfilled that gracious promise of their blessed Saviour to all
‘ good

‘ good men ; To such as shall overcome, I
‘ will give to them to eat of the tree of life,
‘ which is in the midst of the paradise of God,
‘ Rev. ii. 7. For whenever any faithful
‘ and obedient souls depart from their bo-
‘ dies, he presently sends forth his angelic
‘ messengers, to carry them, as they did
‘ that of *Lazarus*, into *Abraham’s* bosom,
‘ the place of happy spirits departed ; and
‘ there to lodge them in one of those bliss-
‘ ful mansions in his father’s house, which
‘ he went before to prepare for them.’

*The misery of bad men upon the sepa-
ration.*

BUT quite the reverse of all this, will
be the change which the souls of the
wicked and ungodly must undergo, as soon
as they are separated from their bodies.
For though for wise and gracious ends,
God often spares bad men in this life, and
sometimes shines upon them in a continued
day of prosperity, without any cloud or
interruption; yet he will for certain over-
take

take them with the fearful storms of his vengeance, in the life to come. Then all that they delighted themselves with in this world, is irretrievably gone and lost, and passed away from them for ever; and they shall see themselves encompassed only with dreadful sights, abandoned by G O D, and haunted by evil spirits; being filled at present with inexpressible horror and despair, and confounded with the just expectations of greater and more intolerable miseries, which are to come hereafter.

‘ IF indeed there were any respite after
 ‘ Death for those who have been wicked
 ‘ in this life; if there were but some hun-
 ‘ dreds of years intermission, in a state of
 ‘ sleep and forgetfulness, this would be
 ‘ some little present comfort to them. But
 ‘ when upon their departure hence, their
 ‘ state of misery must immediately com-
 ‘ mence; when not only after the final
 ‘ judgment, they must dwell with *devour-*
 ‘ *ing fire*, and *everlasting burnings*, but in
 ‘ the interval be company for infernal spi-
 ‘ rits only, and with them be equally re-
 ‘ served

‘ served in chains of darkness, against the
‘ judgment of the great day; when they
‘ must be immediately consigned to a
‘ place and state of irretrievable misery; a
‘ place, where there is no company but
‘ the devil and his angels, and those lost
‘ souls that have been seduced by them;
‘ a place of horrid darkness, where there
‘ shines not the least glimmering of light
‘ or comfort; a place of wretched spirits,
‘ that are continually vexed at the sad re-
‘ membrance of their former sins and fol-
‘ lies, and feel the dreadful wrath of God
‘ for them, and tremble at the apprehen-
‘ sion of a greater wrath still to come: This
‘ is the miserable place and state, where-
‘ into unrepenting sinners shall immediately
‘ enter when they die. For as good angels,
‘ which ministered to holy souls, when in
‘ the body, will, by the command of Christ,
‘ certainly resort and minister to them,
‘ when they come out of it, to guard them
‘ safe from the malicious purposes of evil
‘ spirits so there is little reason to doubt,
‘ but that evil spirits, which tempted and
‘ inflamed wicked souls to sin, and to of-
‘ fend

‘ send God in this life, will be ready to
‘ seize and carry away the poor helpless
‘ wretches, as soon as they enter the con-
‘ fines of another, into some dark and dis-
‘ mal abodes; there to suffer with them
‘ all the torments and agonies, that the
‘ wrath and malice of devils, together with
‘ their own awakened consciences, and fu-
‘ rious and unsatisfied affections, are able
‘ to inflict.’ O how then should we fre-
quently ponder these things in our hearts
beforehand, and use our utmost diligence
and care to be prepared for the one, and
to avoid the other!

WHEN we have any matters of great
importance in our view, relating to our
worldly concerns, how do we continually
think upon them, and bend all our cares,
and employ all our endeavours, for the
obtaining of them; if we have expectations
of great advantage from them? And if
we find in ourselves any indispositions for
the enjoyment of them, how careful are
we for the removing of them; accounting
them our best friends, who are so kind as
to advise us to the most proper and likely
means

means for the accomplishing our desires? How inexcusable then shall we be to ourselves, and how justly to be blamed for it by others, if when matters of much greater concern, than any of this world can be of, are proposed to us, and it is of the greatest consequence to us to be duly prepared for them (our eternal happiness hereafter depending upon it;) I say, how inexcusable shall we be, if in a case of such vast importance to us, we should hardly ever allow ourselves so much time, as to bestow one serious thought about it, and should spend all our lives carelessly and idly upon trifles; and in the mean time let whole days, and months, and years pass over our heads, without once reflecting upon that happiness or misery, which must certainly follow this life? Without once enquiring whether we are fitted to enjoy the one, or must suffer the other?

Now since things shall certainly be so, the apostle's inference is very proper to be made by every one of us; 1 *Pet.* iii. 11. *What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?* How should we watch continually, and be always upon

D our

our guard against the temptations of the world ; lest they should at any time divert our thoughts from considering our main concern, and should betray us into the commission of such follies, as will be the occasion of inexpressible vexation, torment, and trouble to us for ever and ever hereafter?

*The vast consequence of being prepared
for Death.*

THIRDLY, Another thing which should engage us frequently to think of Death is, not only because it will produce a vast alteration in us from what we were before, while our souls and bodies were united together ; and therefore it must needs be our highest prudence to be so well prepared for it, that we may not be in a worse condition after Death, than we were before ; but also because the time is very uncertain, when this great alteration may happen, that *God may require our souls of us.*

WERE it a thing fixed and settled to a certain time for every one of us, we might then so order our affairs, as not to be surprized

prized with it unawares; but when we foresaw the time of Death approaching, we might set ourselves more steadily to prepare ourselves for it. But this is by no means our case. God almighty, in whose power alone our lives and souls are, has thought fit, in his great wisdom, and indeed in his great goodness likewise towards mankind, to conceal from every man the exact time of his dissolution. He has plainly enough declared to all men, that it shall certainly be at some time or other; but he has nowhere told us what the certain time is which he has determined for every man; on purpose that we might every one of us, so carefully, and prudently, and religiously demean ourselves in this world, that we might be always prepared for it, whenever it comes.

God knowing of what great consequence it is to all of us to die well, has for that reason left the time of it very uncertain to every man; and moreover has added another consideration to put us in mind of preparing for it, as soon as possibly we can, without delay; and that is, by appointing

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the time of our stay in this world to be very short. He has not only shewn us by innumerable instances, almost every day of our lives, how 'abundance of accidents, which we can neither foresee nor prevent, may cut us off suddenly, and put an end to our being in this world, almost in a moment : but he has fixed it by a law not to be altered, that the life of man should be but short. If now and then, for very wise and good ends of his providence, he permits some men to live a few years longer than their neighbours, yet are their days at the best but of *a short continuance* : For *the days of man are but as grass ; for he flourisheth as a flower of the field, which as soon as the wind goeth over it, it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more, Psal. ciii. 15, 16.*

Now these two things considered together, the uncertainty of the time when we must die, and how short that time may be before it comes to pass to any of us ; should (one would think) be a never-failing argument to persuade us to keep the time of Death frequently in our thoughts, and to make all the haste that possibly we can to be prepared for it.

The general fault of men, in not taking care to prepare for Death as they ought to do.

AND yet if we observe the way of the world, how few are there that ever consider so seriously of it, as they ought to do? A thousand other things take up all their thoughts, and engross all their cares; but as for dying, that is usually the last thing, which the generality of men ever employ their thoughts about till they feel themselves approaching towards it, by some severe fit of sickness giving them warning, that the time of their departure out of this world is drawing nigh.

WHILE men are young, and healthful, and vigorous, the thoughts of Death are then esteemed a little unseasonable: and when they begin to grow into years, then they are so much engaged in the business of this world, and are so taken up with the cares of this life, or the pleasures of it, with their families and their friends, that they can hardly find in their hearts to think

of so serious and melancholy a thing as dying is. They rather choose to put a cheat upon themselves, and are apt to flatter themselves with long life, by computing the whole duration of the life of man, without considering how much of this is past already with them, and how little of it is still to come. They reckon upon living threescore and ten, or fourscore years, or more; but seldom consider that it may be, thirty, or forty, or fifty of these are spent; that is, the best part of their lives is already gone. Whereas they ought to consider how their life shortens every day; and this would make them look upon every moment as more precious, and put them upon thinking of living in the best sense; that is of minding the true ends and purposes of life, of doing the work for which they came into the world, and which they must do before they die, or they will be miserable for ever.

THIS would put them upon looking back upon their lives and actions while they are well and in health, and upon considering what they have done, or left undone

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in the world ; ‘ how they have spent that
‘ time which G o d has given them here,
‘ and what they have still to do to make
‘ their peace with God, and their own con-
‘ sciences, *before they go hence, and be no*
‘ *more seen* : whether there be any sin, which
‘ they have committed, and have not yet
‘ thoroughly repented of, and heartily beg-
‘ ged God’s pardon for ; whether there be
‘ any injuries which they have done to
‘ their neighbour, for which they have not
‘ yet made sufficient restitution and repa-
‘ ration ; whether there be any duties
‘ which they have grossly neglected, or
‘ sins and follies which they have often
‘ committed ; and apply themselves to the
‘ diligent discharge of the one, and use their
‘ best endeavours to amend the others :
‘ whether there be any graces which want
‘ to be improved in their souls ; what evil
‘ inclinations and unruly passions to be
‘ mortified ; and to apply proper remedies
‘ to them. Such as this would be our best
‘ preparation for Death ; for indeed no-
‘ thing else can give us hope and assurance
‘ in dying, and create true peace and sa-
‘ tisfaction in our minds in a dying hour,

‘ but a thorough knowledge of our own
‘ state; and that we have used our sincere
‘ and utmost endeavours, with the assist-
‘ ance of God’s grace, to rectify whatever
‘ has been amiss in the conduct of our whole
‘ lives.’

THIS is the only way to deliver our consciences from those dreadful fears, which will otherwise, at that solemn time of dying, most certainly spring up in our minds, if we have led lawless, wicked, and ungodly lives; and have not been so wise as to prepare ourselves for it beforehand, by a hearty repentance of all our past errors, and to make our peace with God, through the merits of our Saviour. This indeed would disarm Death of its sting and terrors, *for the sting of Death is sin*; and when this sting is pulled out, we have nothing else to contend with, but some little natural aversions to dying, which would then be more easily conquered.

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The happiness or misery of Men in the next world, entirely depends upon their behaviour in this.

FOURTHLY, Another thing which we ought frequently to consider, and fix very well upon our minds, is this, that our happiness or misery in the next world, does entirely depend upon our behaviour while we live in this world only. GOD has placed us in this world as in a state of trial and probation for that which is to come. According as we behave ourselves here, so will our lot be hereafter. This the wise man is generally thought to intend by those remarkable words of his, *Eccles. xi. 3. As the tree falls, so it shall lie;* meaning thereby, that such as a man is when he goes out of this world, good or bad, fitted for happiness or misery, such will be his fate unchangeably to all eternity. There is no altering or bettering our condition, when we are once passed from hence. Death concludes and determines our state one way or other; and therefore it is very rightly said, that *as Death leaves*
us,

us, judgment will find us. This life is the only time to work and prepare ourselves for a future state; and what we do towards it in this world, will redound to our great advantage in the next. But if this opportunity be once neglected and lost, there is nothing to be done by us afterwards, but to inherit the fruit of our own folly and neglect, to sit down in everlasting sorrow, and to be immutably fixt in that miserable state, which, whilst we were in this world, we could never be persuaded to take any tolerable care to avoid.

AND if we can do nothing for ourselves hereafter, to help and relieve us in that state to which Death consigns us, much less can we think it can be done for us by others, by ordering of masses and prayers for the dead, and by applying the merits of others, and the indulgences of Popes, to our use and benefit in another world; as is the shameful practice of those in the church of *Rome*; by which innumerable poor souls, in that abominable corrupt church, have been deluded, and I am afraid have been lost and undone for ever, while they

they have been persuaded by their priests, to put their confidence in them for their salvation.

It infinitely therefore concerns all of us to exercise our best wisdom in this present life; and what we have to do for the salvation of our souls to all eternity, to do it with all our might. Here let our main care be, as much as possibly we can, to live a religious and holy life, a life of unspotted purity, and great temperance in the use of sensual pleasures, of sincere piety and devotion towards God, of strict justice and integrity, and of great goodness and charity towards men. Let us take care to use the best means we can, to be happy hereafter, while the opportunity of doing it is still in our hands; that is, while God is so gracious as to afford us life, and strength. Let us remember, that we may easily let this proper time for it slip away; which if we should be so unhappy as to do, no care, no wisdom, no diligence, no repentance, can be able to retrieve it afterwards. When it is once lost, it is lost for ever.

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It is appointed unto men, as the apostle tells us, Heb. ix. 27. once to die, but after this the judgment: and St Luke xiii. 25. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, there is no more admision. ‘ This argument is represented to us under a very fit similitude, by one of the most ancient writers next to the apostles times; As the Potter, says he, while the clay is moist and soft, moulds it over and over again, if it pleases him not at first; but after it has been once hardened in the fire, its shape can be mended no more: so in the present life, GOD affords men from time to time space and means of repentance; but after Death and Judgment have once passed upon them, and they be cast into the fire, there is no more remedy for ever.’ Most excellent therefore is the advice of the wise man, to every one of us, *Eccles. ix. 10.* and they are truly wise, and they only so, that follow it: *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.*

By this word, the grave, is often understood, the state of the dead, the condition of separate souls of good or bad men, after they are departed this life, and entered into another world. In which state, as a learned prelate of our church has observed, ‘*Solomon* does not mean, that departed souls have no knowledge or sense of any thing; as if the next world were an idle and unactive state, where we shall know nothing, and have nothing to do; but only that Death puts an end to our working for another world. There will then be no place for counsel and design, for repentance, or any other work of that kind, in order to undo what we have done amiss in this life; and so to amend it, as it may not be any hindrance to our future happiness.’ Whatever we do for this end and purpose, must be done whilst we are in this world; it will be too late, when we are in the state of the Dead, to think of altering or bettering our condition. This life is the only proper season for doing those things, whereby our future happiness is to be secured.

WHEN

WHEN this life is at an end, there will be no farther opportunity of working for eternity. Nothing will then remain for us to do, but to reap the fruit, and to receive the just recompence for ever, of what we have done and deserved by our actions in this life. Agreeable to this, is what our Saviour tells us, That the time limited by GOD almighty for our working for eternity, that is, for an eternity of happiness or misery hereafter, is the day of this life only: *We must work while it is day*, that is, the day of this life; *the night*, that is, Death cometh, *when no man can work*, St John ix. 4.

THIS matter indeed is so clearly revealed to us every where in the gospel, that our state of trial ends with this life, and that the next life is for reward or punishment, as to admit of no reasonable doubt about it. All the promises and threatnings made therein concerning the next life, do all plainly relate to our behaviour in this life. But there is not the least shadow or glimpse of comfort given to those that shall lose this opportunity, of ever having any other; nor the least ground given them of thinking,

thinking, that they may escape by any repentance after they are once dead.

I SHALL mention but one thing more, which is this, that as there is no repentance in the grave, no altering there what we have done amiss in this life, nor any atonement then to be made for it; the time for that being then entirely past and gone; (which makes it exceeding foolish, or rather great madness, for any one to rely upon any such thing) so likewise is it of the greatest consequence to us to remember always that we do not put off our repentance, till we are in a manner just ready to descend into our graves; as the way, I am afraid, of too many is, to defer their repentance to their death-beds, which is a very dangerous thing.

*The exceeding great danger of putting off
our repentance to a death-bed.*

NOW that this is a very dangerous thing, is evident from hence;

First,

First, Because of the great uncertainty there is, whether we shall then have time for it, to do it as we ought to do. And,

Secondly, Because it is very uncertain, whether it will be available or no to the pardon of our sins.

First, A death-bed repentance is very dangerous, because of the great uncertainty there is, whether we shall then have time for it, to do it as we ought to do. I believe indeed, that a great many wicked men are sensible enough that they ought to repent of their sins in this life, in order to their being happy in the next; and therefore do really intend to do so. But here is the great mischief of all, they are willing to put it off as long as possibly they can, and hope that they shall have time enough to do it once for all, when they shall be cast upon the bed of sickness, and the time of their Death seems to be approaching. But this is to depend upon a very great uncertainty, which no wise man

in the whole world should do, in a matter of such great importance as this is, his eternal happiness or misery depending upon it.

TRUE repentance is a very serious thing, and requires some time, and withal, great composedness of mind, to render it such as it should be, to qualify it for God's acceptance. It must, especially in great sinners, such as they are wont to be, who put off their repentance wholly to the last; In such, I say, it must be attended with a very hearty and unfeigned sorrow, with great anguish of soul, with earnest indignation against themselves for their sins, and with a terrible sense of the desert of them. They ought to call to mind all the particular acts of their more heinous, wilful, and deliberate sins, at least, as far as they can, and more expressly to ask God's pardon for them; and at the same time be most heartily sorry for them, and to condemn themselves, as unworthy to find favour with God for them; as having been so wickedly ungrateful to their greatest benefactor. They ought to recollect the injuries they may have done

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‘ to others, and to contrive how to make
‘ them all the reparation that is in their
‘ power for them: and to forgive from
‘ their hearts all those that have injured
‘ them.’ These things, and abundance
more, would a true and sincere repentance
suggest to a man’s mind, as fit, and even
necessary to be done by him, when he does
not trifle with G O D and his own soul;
enough certainly to employ all his powers,
when he is at the freshest, and has health,
and vigour, and time to do them.

B U T can a man be fit to do all these
things, as he ought, on a death-bed? ‘How
‘ can he then be able to do the greatest and
‘ most momentous work of all his whole
‘ life, when all the powers of life are either
‘ quite decayed in him, or in such great
‘ disorder and confusion, that he knows
‘ not well what he has to do, or how to
‘ go about to do it? How can he attend
‘ with seriousness to the great work of re-
‘ pentance, when he is distracted with bo-
‘ dily pains, lies languishing under the
‘ faintness of a disease, is afflicted with the
‘ grief of parting with all that he has in
‘ the world, all his dear relations, all his
‘ beloved

‘ beloved enjoyments; when his head akes,
‘ and his heart faints; and especially when
‘ his mind is in such disorder and confu-
‘ sion, with the fears and apprehensions of
‘ approaching Death, and the terrors of
‘ GOD, which are now round about him,
‘ and press him so sorely, that he knows
‘ not where to look for help; when his
‘ conscience reproaches him with number-
‘ less sins, and upbraids him with being a
‘ fool, for leaving what should have been
‘ the chief business of his whole life, his
‘ best and brightest days, to this sad, dark,
‘ and dismal moment; when his fears are
‘ dreadful beyond expression, and his hopes
‘ are little or none at all? I say, how can
‘ this be a fit time for repentance, when
‘ the case is thus with him?’ His sorrow
indeed may be very great, nay, how can
it be otherwise? but sorrow alone is not
repentance; it must be accompanied with
a sincere change of life, where there is
time for it. If a man were well and in
health, sorrow for sin (and the more so,
if it were an act of free choice) would be a
good beginning and a promising sign of
true repentance; because he might have

reason to hope for time to experience the sincerity of it, by the good effects it would have upon his life afterwards ; but there is no possibility of knowing that now.

Secondly, Such a death-bed repentance is very dangerous, because it is very uncertain whether it will be available or no to the pardon of our sins. It being exceedingly unlikely, that a death-bed repentance should be true and sincere : and unless it be so, it will not be available to pardon.

Now there are two or three things which render it greatly doubtful, whether it will be sincere, or no.

FIRST, A true and sincere repentance is the gift of God, and not at our command, to be had just when we please. ‘ God is
 ‘ indeed always ready to give the grace of
 ‘ repentance to those, who in the time of
 ‘ health, devoutly and heartily ask it of
 ‘ him, and shew a good disposition of soul
 ‘ to embrace and close in with the tender
 ‘ of it. But when men have spent their
 ‘ whole lives in sin and rebellion against
 ‘ God, to whose glory they ought to have
 ‘ lived ; when they have through a long
 ‘ course

‘ course of many years resisted all the means
‘ of grace, and stifled all the holy motions
‘ which the spirit of God did put into their
‘ minds, to invite and urge them to break
‘ off their sins; and have stopped their
‘ ears to all his calls, and refused to repent
‘ and turn unto him; how can they expect
‘ that God should give them grace sin-
‘ cerely to repent at last, which they have
‘ so long and so obstinately despised; and
‘ which they now desire, not so much out
‘ of hatred of their sins, but because they
‘ think they can live no longer in them?
‘ It is much rather to be feared, that God
‘ should give up such obstinate sinners to
‘ a judicial hardness at the last, and suffer
‘ them to be forgetful of themselves at the
‘ point of Death, who have been all their
‘ lives long forgetful of God, and their
‘ duty to him; who, because they would
‘ not hearken to the many calls to repent-
‘ ance, and endeavour to obtain his pardon
‘ before, shall now have no thought or
‘ concern about it.’

AGREEABLY to what we are told by
God himself, in the first chapter of *Pro-*
verbs,

verbs, ver. 24, and so on; *Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.*

Of this we have a sad instance in the impenitent thief, who was crucified with our Saviour: for while the penitent thief, it is true, found mercy, and pardon at his last hour; the other affords us an example of a wicked man given up to a reprobate mind, and forsaken of grace, and so dying hard and impenitent. Which one would think should be as strong an argument, to warn wicked men of their danger, in relying upon a death-bed repentance, as the penitent thief's

thief's obtaining mercy at last is pretended to be, for their flattering themselves in their security. Especially when they consider too, what *St Paul* has plainly told them; *Rom. ii. 4, 5. That they who despise the riches of God's goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, and do not consider that the goodness of God is designed to lead them to repentance, do treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath.* ' All which shews
' what little encouragement there is for
' men to presume, that *GOD* will enable
' them to do that when they come to die,
' which they would never be persuaded to
' do while they lived.'

SECONDLY, Another thing which renders the sincerity of a death-bed repentance greatly doubtful is, the exceeding difficulty there is of performing it in such a manner as it ought to be done. ' A true
' and sincere repentance must be attended
' with an entire change of a man's mind
' from what it was before; with the most
' steady resolution of abhorring all sin, and
' with a hearty promise of the utmost endeavours to avoid it for the time to come: and how unlikely is this, that
' the

‘ the sinner, who has been habitually wick-
‘ ed, and lived many years in a course of
‘ sin (all his thoughts and inclinations be-
‘ ing entirely bent on the commission of
‘ it) should in a moment, as it were, so fall
‘ out with it, as utterly to hate it, and
‘ throw it off for ever? Or that he should
‘ now all at once, in an instant, quite
‘ change his affections, and hate the sin,
‘ which but a very little before he loved
‘ above all things; and on the contrary,
‘ should just then be seized with a hearty
‘ love of G O D and goodness, which he
‘ hated before, and could hardly ever en-
‘ dure in his thoughts?’

‘ Do not we see continually how hard a
‘ thing it is, for a man that is in health,
‘ and perfect soundness of mind, to get the
‘ better of one evil habit, which he has
‘ been long accustomed to, and would now
‘ reform himself from; as suppose, swear-
‘ ing, or lying, or drunkenness, or lewd-
‘ ness, and the like; how gradually he is
‘ forced to proceed in the conquering of
‘ it; how he sometimes falls back again
‘ into it, notwithstanding his best resolu-
‘ tions

‘ tions against it ; and then perhaps goes
‘ forward again ; and after abundance of
‘ pains and endeavours, does hardly at last
‘ get the entire mastery and dominion over
‘ it ? And can it then be imagined, that
‘ a man can easily do all that at once, or
‘ in a very little time, on a death-bed, as
‘ truly to repent of, and change a whole
‘ body of sin ; when the conquering and
‘ reforming one single sin, has so much
‘ pains and difficulty in it, that it seems
‘ like plucking out a right eye, and cut-
‘ ting off a right hand ? It is very unlikely
‘ it should be so.’

AND agreeably to this, we often see
persons upon their death-bed, still having
the same evil inclinations as they had when
they were well. As they have lived, so
they have died. There was no real and
sincere change in the state and disposition
of their minds. At least it is greatly to be
feared that there was not, because they did
by several ways discover, that their old ac-
customed sins had still possession of their
souls, even when the abilities and oppor-
tunities of committing them were taken
from them. ‘ So vain therefore and de-

‘ lusive are the hopes of men’s repenting
‘ and growing good in their confinement
‘ to a sick-bed in their last moments, when
‘ they have lived in a continual habit and
‘ course of sin all their lives long.’

THIRDLY, There is still one thing more, which gives us the greatest reason to doubt the sincerity of a death-bed repentance; and that is, the frequent experience of such who have been in the like circumstances before, whose repentance has by no means proved sincere. In their sickness and danger, a thousand good vows and promises have been made by them, what holy and righteous persons they will be, if God would but be pleased to spare their lives, and grant them a longer continuance in this world: but how few of them have ever fulfilled their good promises, when God has been merciful to them, and restored them to their health again? No: when the present fear of Death, and the near prospect of a future punishment, has been removed by their recovery, their penitent resolutions have all vanished into air, and left no good influence upon their lives. Which shews that all their vows and promises

mises then were but false and deceitful : and so would never have been accepted of by God, to their pardon and salvation.

To which we may add this further ; that suppose the repentance of any sinners upon their death-bed should be sincere, yet neither they themselves, nor any one about them, can assure them that it is so ; because so many have been deceived in expressions of this kind ; and so none but God, who knows the heart of man, can tell whether this would not be of the same sort. So that at the best they must depart either with uncertain hopes of mercy, which in a case of that moment is a very sad thing : or with dreadful fears of God's vengeance in the next world ; which is so uncomfortable and dismal a state, that one would think he must be a wretched fool or a madman, and lost to all sense of his own good and happiness, that can put off the securing what is the greatest business of his life, to such an uncertainty, that though he might (through the infinite mercy of God) be saved at the last ; yet it is more than he can assure himself of : or any one else

give him any good grounds to hope for, while he is in this world.

Two important questions considered, relating to this affair.

NOW here, before I do fully conclude this discourse; I shall say something to two very important questions relating to this affair, which may very probably be asked by some persons, and they are these.

First, Some may say, ‘Is there no hopes
‘ then for those that shall repent on a death-
‘ bed, that they may obtain mercy from
‘ God at last, and be saved?’

Secondly, ‘ Suppose any one has been so
‘ unwise as to put off his repentance to a
‘ death-bed; what is he then to do? Is he
‘ then to despair of the mercy of God,
‘ and to do nothing towards reconciling
‘ himself to him?’

The first question considered.

TO the first of them, I answer, that I dare not positively affirm, that God will absolutely reject a death-bed repentance: or that it is impossible for a man to be saved upon it. And the reason is this, because it is not absolutely impossible, but that it may be sincere: and if it be sincere, it will certainly be accepted. I say, it is not absolutely impossible: *The wind bloweth where it listeth*: the grace of God may work where and when it pleaseth. Repentance, whenever it is sincere, is the gift of God, and all his actions are free. And if he, for wise reasons known only to himself, be pleased to give the grace of a sincere repentance to a sinner, at that time, no doubt he will accept of it. Though he has given us rules to guide ourselves by, which we are not to alter; yet he has no where so strictly tied himself down to them, that he may not act otherwise himself, when he pleases. He will always undoubtedly act in a manner consistent with his own holiness, justice, and goodness; and

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he will be gracious to whom he will be gracious: and he will shew mercy on whom he will shew mercy, Exod. xxxiii. 19.

HE has no where given us authority to declare, that a death-bed repentance shall be accepted by him; but yet, considering the infinite mercy of God, and the infinite merits of our Saviour, I dare not positively say that it will not. But this I am sure I may say, that it is the wrongest thing in the world to put it off till then; when, whether it will be accepted or no, God has no where declared in his holy word: and there is only a bare possibility to hope that it may be so, but abundance of reasons to fear that it will not. We may hope well in charity; but then that hope can be but very small, which is so far from being grounded on any plain text of scripture, that there are many expressions in it, which incline us to apprehend the contrary. And for this reason, many excellent persons have spoken very doubtfully of it. I shall give you the opinion of some of them in their own words.

THUS says St *Austin*; ‘ The man who
‘ practises repentance in his health, and
‘ afterwards

‘ afterwards lives well, may be secure :
‘ but he that repents only at last, at the
‘ point of Death, whether he be secure,
‘ or not, I am not sure.’

ANOTHER says thus, ‘ If a man spends
‘ his whole life in wickedness, and then
‘ comes to repent at the point of death ;
‘ as his damnation is uncertain, so is his
‘ pardon doubtful also.’

THUS another ; ‘ What to say in this
‘ case, I know not. To discourage and
‘ withhold a man from seeking and using
‘ this last remedy, were hard and impious ;
‘ but to promise and assure him any thing
‘ in so late a repentance, were also rash.’

THUS also the famous Bishop *Andrews* ;
‘ This fashion of repenting on a death-bed,
‘ I can say little to, but I pray GOD it de-
‘ ceive us not. It is not good trying con-
‘ clusions about our souls.’

I WILL add but this one testimony more
of a late very great and pious divine. ‘ It
‘ is a miracle of GOD’s grace and mercy,
‘ if any repentance, that men can exercise
‘ upon a death-bed, will be accepted ; if
‘ any importunity that men can then use
‘ will be available. Enough one would

‘ think to discourage any one, that has
 ‘ not lost his wits, from venturing the sal-
 ‘ vation of his soul upon so doubtful an
 ‘ uncertainty.’

The second question considered.

THE second question; ‘ What has
 ‘ that person then to do, that has
 ‘ been so unwise, as to put off his repent-
 ‘ ance to his death-bed? Is he then to
 ‘ despair of the mercy of God, and do
 ‘ nothing towards reconciling himself to
 ‘ him?’ I answer, God forbid. He has
 indeed run so prodigious a hazard, that I
 cannot help calling him most unwise and
 foolish for so doing. But yet let him not
 add this sin to his former folly; to despair
 of the mercy of God. While he is yet
 alive, who knows but there may be hopes.
 ‘ Let him therefore exercise as deep a sor-
 ‘ row and repentance for his sins, as he
 ‘ can possibly, and cry mightily to God
 ‘ for mercy, in and through the merits of
 ‘ our blessed Saviour. Let him endea-
 ‘ vour to make himself as sensible as he
 ‘ can

‘ can of the evil of his past doings, and
‘ move himself, upon the best considera-
‘ tions, to abhor and detest them. Let
‘ him solemnly warn all about him from
‘ the paths in which he himself has walked.
‘ For the warnings of persons in that con-
‘ dition are used to carry great force with
‘ them, and to dissuade others from the
‘ like follies. Let as much of his time,
‘ as is possible, be spent in prayers, and
‘ in godly conversation with good people:
‘ and let him earnestly entreat others to
‘ pray for him. Let him be sure to exer-
‘ cise acts of the most hearty forgiveness
‘ to all that have injured him, and give
‘ the best directions, as far as is in his
‘ power, for the reparations of the wrongs
‘ which he himself may have done to
‘ others: or in case that be not in his pow-
‘ er, let him pray to G o d to make them
‘ amends some way or other. Let him
‘ be as large in his charity to the poor as
‘ in reason he ought to be; but be sure
‘ that it be with justice to others, for *God*
‘ *hateth robbery for burnt-offerings*, Isa. lxi. 8.
‘ But true *charity*, we are told, *will cover*
‘ *a multitude of sins*, 1 Peter iv. 8. After
‘ all

‘ all that can be said, we must leave him
‘ to God, who is a most merciful, as well
‘ as a most just judge; who, if there be
‘ any thing found favourable in his case,
‘ will, out of his infinite compassion, for
‘ Christ’s sake, extend mercy to him. But
‘ I dare not say he will be accepted, nor
‘ dare I deny it; but as I greatly fear it,
‘ so I fervently pray for it.’

AND oh! that I could now prevail with
such, as may have been too apt to be car-
ried away with the common delusion of
thinking it time enough then to repent,
and ask pardon of God for all their sins,
when they shall be cast upon a sick or
death-bed, from the example perhaps of
the penitent thief in the gospel, upon the
cross; I say, oh! that I could prevail with
them to consider seriously, what they are
doing! they are putting off the most im-
portant concern of their whole lives, their
making their peace with God, and pre-
paring for eternity, to the most unfit time
in the world for it.

THEY reckon that their last sickness
will come on and increase upon them by
degrees, and so give them due warning
and

and opportunity, to make up all accounts between G O D and their own souls: and hope then that they may die in peace.

BUT who can secure them, that it shall be thus with them? Do not we know that it may be otherwise, and have we not many times seen it to be so? That the death's wound has been given in a moment, without any warning beforehand: or has been attended with such circumstances, that if a bare saying, a Lord have mercy upon him, would have saved the poor creature's soul, he could not have done it? Is not this the case of those, that have been struck suddenly with apoplexies, lethargies, dead palsies, and the like?

‘ AND is it not also sometimes so bad
‘ with men on their sick-beds, that though
‘ there is time, yet there is no opportunity
‘ of doing any thing well, as it should be;
‘ the dozingness of the distemper, or their
‘ violent distracting pains, or their frequent
‘ faintings, or their dreadful fears of what
‘ is coming upon them (which their guilty
‘ consciences do at that time especially pre-
‘ sent them withal) do so take away the
‘ heart, and confound all the senses, that
‘ there

‘ there can be little or no consideration at
‘ all of what they are to say or do, in or-
‘ der to reconcile themselves to God; and
‘ to exercise a just and proper repentance
‘ for all the former miscarriages of their
‘ whole lives.’

OR still further, ‘ Granting their case
‘ should be more favourable; that the
‘ distemper should be lingering and gra-
‘ dual, and their senses perfectly secured to
‘ them; yet then they are apt to think more
‘ of recovering than dying; of sending
‘ for this or the other physician, of taking
‘ this or the other medicine; and their re-
‘ lations and friends are to use the best me-
‘ thods they can to support their spirits,
‘ with giving them hopes of a longer life,
‘ that the medicines may take the better
‘ effect: so that they are in a manner sur-
‘ prised with Death at the last; and the
‘ great work has all this while been neg-
‘ lected, even when they had time and op-
‘ portunity for doing something in it.’

OR lastly, If they should then be very
serious, and should be heartily willing to
endeavour to do their best, to make their
repentance

repentance sincere; 'Yet they can hardly
' expect, that God should then accept of
' the dregs of their lives, when their best
' and brightest years have been spent alto-
' gether in the devil's service:' I say, they
can hardly expect it, and at the best, must
be in dreadful fears, that he will not do it,
and so must go out of the world in this dis-
mal uncertainty; which makes their case
so very bad, in a matter of such infinite
importance to them (their happiness or
misery to all eternity) that I know not what
name of reproach to give it, that is bad
enough for it.

Serious advice, by way of conclusion.

LET me therefore beseech you all who
shall read this, that you would not
suffer yourselves to be deluded with that
fatal mistake of many wilful sinners, who
vainly hope, that the sorrow which they
reserve to be expressed on their death-beds,
will be sufficient to atone for the wicked
and unchristian conduct of their whole past
lives; whereby many souls have been lost
and

and undone for ever ; but that you would practise repentance in the time of your health by forsaking your sins betimes, and living a good and virtuous life, to the glory of God, as he has commanded, and you solemnly engaged to do at your holy baptism.

THEN, when the sad night of sickness and Death draws near, the reflections upon a well-spent life, or on having been true and sincere penitents, will be the richest cordials to refresh and comfort you, in that dismal hour of weakness and pain ; then will the joyful hopes and expectations of that rest and happiness which God has promised in the next world to all good men and repenting sinners, alleviate all your present pains, and make you willing and even desirous to depart out of this world, that you may enter into the possession of the heavenly mansions above, there to rejoice with joy unspeakable with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and all the holy angels and saints, for ever and ever.

*A Prayer for an holy and happy
Death.*

O Most holy and righteous Lord God, who in thy great wisdom hast appointed Death for all men, and made it an entrance into the next world, where we must be happy or miserable to all eternity; O do thou, by thy good providence, and the gracious assistance of thy Holy Spirit, conduct me so safely through all the dangers and temptations of this mortal life; that when the time of my great change shall come, that I must go hence and be no more seen, I may be prepared for it in such a manner, as may, through thy own infinite compassion, and the infinite merits of my dear Saviour, procure for me a happy entrance into the blessed regions of rest and peace, there to wait for thy coming, and then to partake of the glories of thy kingdom, with all thy blessed saints and servants, who have lived in thy fear, and died in thy favour, and with them and all thy holy angels, sing thy praises to all eternity. *Amen.*

Another.

Another.

O Blessed Jesus, who camest down from heaven to be the Saviour of mankind, by dying for them, and by thy Death hast taken out the sting of Death, and made it an entrance to eternal life; O fit and prepare me for it, by teaching me so to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto true wisdom; and in the days of health and prosperity may so consider my latter end; that when the time of my departure shall come, I may not be surpris'd at it, but may meet Death without fear and amazement: and with a well-grounded hope of thy mercy and goodness, may chearfully resign up my soul into thy hands, being willing and even desirous to leave this world, when thou my God and Saviour in thy great wisdom shalt see it fitting to be done.

I KNOW, O Lord, that the cruel enemy of souls, will then be trying all his arts to affright me with his terrors, and to disturb me in my passage into the other world; but do thou, O blessed Lord, defend me
from

from all his assaults and delusions. And I most humbly beseech thee, strengthen my faith, and enable me, by the consolations of thy Holy Spirit, entirely to trust in thee: and when my Death approaches, be thou pleased to give thy holy angels charge to stand as a guard about me, to receive my soul into their hands, and conduct it safely to the blessed mansions, which thou hast prepared for all thy faithful servants. *Amen, Amen.*





A

DISCOURSE

ON THE

Future Judgment.



THE second of the Four last Things (as they are called) which I proposed to treat of, is the-future Judgment. This I shall endeavour to do in such a manner, as may, I hope, be most likely to persuade all those, who shall seriously consider what I shall say concerning it, to make it the main business of their lives, to be sincerely good, and just, and holy in this world, in order to prepare themselves to appear before the *judgment-seat of Christ* at the end of it, when they are to receive
from

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from him their final sentence to happiness or misery, for all eternity, according to the good or evil of their doings. The method wherein I propose to proceed in treating of this great and important article of a future Judgment, shall be this.

First, I will shew the certainty of a future Judgment.

Secondly, When this Judgment shall be.

Thirdly, Who is to be the judge, *viz.* Christ Jesus; and what the solemnity of his appearing to that end will be.

Fourthly, Who the persons are, that are to be judged.

Fifthly, What they are to be judged for.

Sixthly, What will be the consequence of this Judgment.

The certainty of a future Judgment.

NOW this is not only expressly declared to us in the holy and infallible

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ble words of G O D, but he has given to mankind many other intimations of his will concerning it; such as must needs convince every considering man of the truth of it, that thus it shall be.

F I R S T, As to the places of the holy scripture, wherein this is plainly and in exprefs words revealed to us, they are so many, that I need mention only some few of them. Thus *Heb. ix. 27.* it is declared to us to be the determinate counsel of almighty God, actually to judge the world; *It is appointed unto all men once to die, but after this the Judgment.* As death is appointed to be the conclusion of this life to all men, so is a Judgment of all to follow that death. The one is as certain as the other. Thus also *St Paul* assures us, *2 Cor. v. 10.* *We must all appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* Thus also again, *Rom. ii. 5, 6.* there shall be a revelation of the righteous Judgment of God (*viz.* at the end of the world) *who will then render to every man according to his deeds.* Thus also we are told, *Eccles. xii. 14.*
God

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God shall bring every work into Judgment, with every secret thing; whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

SECONDLY, As to the other intimations of GOD's will concerning a future Judgment of all men, these likewise are very plain to all that will duly consider them. God has made man a reasonable creature; not like the brute beasts, who are governed by instinct, and know not what they do, and as such therefore are not accountable for their actions. But the reason of man is given him to direct him in all his actions, and to make him capable of judging of them, whether they are well or ill done; and for this reason he is accountable for them, when they are done.

AND moreover, man has a rule to live by, which is either the law of nature within his own mind, or the revealed will of GOD, to inform him what is good and what is evil; and likewise a liberty of will to choose the good and refuse the evil: and he thereby becomes capable of praise or blame, of reward or punishment, for the good or evil which he does.

THEN

THEN again, as man is the creature of God, and so subject to him, and accountable to him for all his actions; so there is all the reason in the world to believe, that he will require from him an account of them: and if he has behaved himself obediently and dutifully to the laws of his creator and sovereign Lord, he will then reward him for it; now, since this is not always done in this world, we may conclude, it will certainly be done some time hereafter in another world. But if man has carried himself perversely towards his creator, by offending him, and rebelling against his just and righteous laws, he will not always let him go unpunished for his wickedness, and hold his peace, as if he took no notice of it; but he will call him to a severe account at some other time for all his disobedience and ingratitude, and then make him feel a Judgment for it worthy of God.

FURTHER yet, to assure all men of this, that they shall be accountable for all their actions, God has made the conscience of man of such a frame, that it secretly hints
this

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this to him, at all times, whenever he does well or ill. We are all sensible that there is such a principle implanted in every one of us, which not only directs and informs us what we ought to do, and what to avoid; but moreover encourages or rebukes us, according as what we have done is good or evil. Now upon this sentence, which our consciences do never fail to pass on all our actions, if we have done well, we find a secret pleasure and satisfaction in our minds, approving and commending us for what we have done: but if ill, we find a secret fear and distrust arise in our minds, which, do what we can, fills us with great uneasiness upon every reflection on it afterwards, and forebodes our suffering some evil or punishment for it, at some time or other; though perhaps we did it so secretly, that no body but G O D and our own consciences were privy to our acting of it; and accuses and condemns us no less, according to the demerit of it, than if we had done it in the face of the whole world. And especially, the nearer we approach to our latter end, the more powerful and vigorous usually are these impressions of our consciences

consciences upon our souls. Now there is hardly any reason can be given, why great sinners should then be fullest of dreadful fears on account of their wicked actions, when they are just going to leave this world, so as that they cannot be called to any further account for them in it: and that the good and righteous should at that time feel the greatest joy and satisfaction, at the remembrance of their good deeds; except it be this, that GOD has wrought into the minds of all men a suggestion and presage of what he will do hereafter; how he will bring the actions of all men into a most exact Judgment, when he will reward every man according to his works. To the evil shall be allotted some dreadful punishment suitable to their ungodly deeds: and to the good shall be given some ample reward for their righteous deeds, far beyond what they could ever have expected in this life.

EVEN the heathens themselves, who wanted an external revelation to confirm to them the truth and certainty of a future Judgment, were strongly possessed with some notion of it. They had a serious apprehension

prehension both of the power of the conscience of man, and of the exactness of the justice of God, and from thence concluded that there is a Judgment to come. In-
somuch that St *Paul's* discourse, of righteousness and temperance, and a Judgment to come, had such an effect upon *Felix* the *Roman* governor, a very wicked man, that he could not forbear being struck with horror in his soul, and trembling in his limbs, at the mention thereof by the holy apostle, *Acts* xxiv. 25.

ONCE more, for a still more ample and more irresistible proof of this great truth, a Judgment to come, let us a while reflect upon the providence of God, in his government of this world. For that the world is governed not by chance, but by his all-wise and unerring providence is as certain, as that it was at first made by his almighty power. Now let us consider likewise, that justice is an essential attribute of God. He can no more be unjust, than he can be unholy or unmerciful. Now joining both these together, and considering withal, how strange and unaccountable some of the dispensations of his providence

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now are, I mean with regard to the crosses and afflictions of some good men, and the prosperity and flourishing estate of some bad men in this world, it will be exceeding hard, if not impossible, for us to vindicate the justice of God's dealings with mankind, without acknowledging the certainty of a future Judgment; when all the irregularities which we now behold in the state and condition of good and bad men, and we seem to have reason to complain of, shall be entirely set to rights, by a most exact dispensation of rewards and punishments to every one at the last, according as they shall have deserved in this life. This will then let us see, that though, for very good reasons, which we cannot at present comprehend, providence does now sometimes suffer virtue and vice to be unsuitably treated here: and that though God may connive at the wicked for a while, either for their repentance, or in order to punish them more severely afterwards; though he may at present try the faith and constancy of his good and faithful servants by afflictions, as he did in the case of his servant *Job*; yet that the marks of the di-

vine

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vine favour and displeasure will not be always thus clouded and concealed, but that all these clouds and darkness shall clear up in a most righteous Judgment at last, to the amazement and conviction of the whole world: and the tongues of angels and men shall then confess, that the Lord was *righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works*, when at the Judgment of the great day they shall see a visible distinction made, between the righteous and the wicked; when the former shall be everlastingly rewarded for their short and momentary troubles in this life, and the latter condemned to everlasting misery for the little short-lived pleasures of sin they enjoyed here.

FROM these considerations therefore we may be assured, that God does hereby intend to teach us, that the forebodings of these things which he has put into our minds are true; for, seeing that a just and exact distribution of them is not made in this world, it is only referred to another: and that then, as sure as God is just, and his word infallible, so certainly there will be a future Judgment; when all the now seeming irregularities of his providence, so

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much complained of, shall be abundantly accounted for, to the entire satisfaction of every one.

Of the time when this Judgment shall be.

THE second thing which I propose to consider on this subject, relates to the time when this Judgment shall be: and that is intimated to us in the scripture, to be *at the end of the world.*

THIS account our Saviour himself gives us of it, in his explication to his disciples of the parable of the wheat and the tares, which grew in the same field, *St Matt. xiii. 37—42. He that soweth the good seed, is the Son of man: the field is the world: the good seed are the children of the kingdom: but the tares are the children of the wicked one: The enemy that sowed them, is the devil: the harvest is the end of the world: and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burnt in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend,*

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offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. The like explication he gives them of the parable of the good and bad fish, which were taken in the same net. *The good were gathered into vessels, but the bad were cast away*, ver. 47, 48. *So shall it be at the end of the world, the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: ver. 49, 50.* So likewise chap. xx. it is in the evening of the world, that is, at the end of it, that the Lord will come to reckon with his servants, and to reward them who have laboured in his vineyard, ver. 8, &c. And besides, when the day of the Lord shall come, that is, when Christ our Lord shall come to Judgment, St Peter tells us, 2 Pet. iii. 10. *The heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also, and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.* And it is but highly reasonable to believe, that when GOD shall judge all mankind, he will put an end to this present state of

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things. For upon that Judgment all good men shall be received up into heaven, and all bad men cast down into hell: and then there will be no more occasion for this world, as it now is, when all the persons, for whose habitation it was designed, are disposed of another way.

As to the exact time, when the end of this world is to be, and when the day of Judgment shall come, this is a secret, which the almighty governor of the world, (who at first made it, and in whose power alone it is to fix the time of its ending) has thought fit, for wise and good reasons, to conceal from the knowledge of all men;

‘ That they may not (as one excellently
‘ speaks) be pufft up with pride and conceit, from their foresight of futurities:
‘ that frail minds may not intermeddle
‘ with divine secrets; that neither security
‘ and presumption (if the day were at a
‘ great distance) nor horror and distraction
‘ (if it were near) might invade mens
‘ minds; but that looking upon every day
‘ as what may bring their great Judge from
‘ heaven, they may live in continual watch-
‘ fulness

‘fulness and preparation for his coming.’ And this ‘at least we are certain of, that at how great distance soever the day of Judgment may be, the day of death cannot be very far from every one of us; the day of death, or the day of Judgment, then will be the same thing to us, in reference to eternity: for since this life is the only time we have to prepare for Judgment, death, which puts an end to this life, does likewise put an end to the working for eternity. So that how long soever it be between death and Judgment, yet our account is the same: and therefore to be surprised by death before we are provided for it, is the same thing as to be surprised by Judgment; for there is no altering our account, after death has once seized us. Let us not, therefore, at any time flatter ourselves, that Judgment may be a great way off from us, when we know not how near death may be, which will finish our account as well as Judgment, and seal us up, as we then are, to eternity, equally with Judgment itself.

Who is to be the Judge of the world.

THE third thing which I propose to consider is, Who is to be the Judge, even Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour: and what the solemnity of his appearing to that end shall be.

As to the first of these, that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is to be the Judge of all the world: This is so expressly declared in many places of the New Testament, that it will be sufficient to mention only some few of them. Thus St John v. 22. *The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son.* Rom. xiv. 10. *We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.* Thus St Peter assures Cornelius concerning Christ; *He commanded us to preach unto the people; and to testify, that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead,* Acts x. 42. And again, xvii. 31. *God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.* By which

which texts it plainly appears, that though the right of judging us belongs to God the Father, whose creatures, servants, and subjects we are; yet the execution of this justiciary power is particularly committed to God the Son, who is the second Person in the blessed Trinity, though he took our nature upon him.

Now there may be several reasons assigned, why God should appoint that very Person, who came into the world to be the Saviour of mankind, to be their Judge also. As,

FIRST, It gives us a great demonstration of the justice of God, in conferring that signal honour upon him. Our Saviour himself tells us, *St John v. 22, 23.* That his Father had committed to him this power of judging the world, with design to honour him. *The Father, says he, judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.* The power of judging the world, is a most glorious power, as it contains in it, not only an authority of giving eternal life and glory in heaven, to as many as he pleaseth; that is,
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of distributing rewards to all such as, when they appear before him at the last day shall be found to have been his faithful and obedient servants; but also an authority of executing vengeance on his obstinate and implacable enemies, that is, on all impenitent sinners; and of condemning them to eternal night and darkness, to *lakes of fire and brimstone, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth for evermore.*

Now to whom could this glorious power be more justly given, than to him, who, though he was the only begotten Son of God, yet was content, in obedience to his Father's will, to humble and debase himself so far, as to leave the glory which he had with his Father before the world was, to come into a world of sin and misery, to work out the redemption of mankind, and mediate a reconciliation between God and man, by his own most bitter sufferings and death?

WHAT could be a more suitable reward, or a more just return from God the Father to his beloved Son, for his great humiliation and sufferings, than that he, who was so ready and content to appear in a low
and

and mean state, when he came into the world to promote the glory of God, and the good of men, should afterwards be appointed, at his second appearing, *To come in the glory of his Father, with his holy angels?* Than that he should have full power given him to absolve or condemn all men, who was, by the powers of the world condemned to die, not for his own sins, but for the sins of others; and died, that he might satisfy the justice of God for the sins of all the world, and make a full atonement for them? Than that all the Sons of men should be obliged to bow before his throne, who though he had no sin himself, yet did not disdain for their sakes to stand as a criminal before the tribunal of *Pontius Pilate*, and receive that unjust sentence from him, *Let him be crucified?*

WHAT could be a more proper reward to the crucified Jesus, for the infamy and death which he underwent, than that he, who was himself judged and condemned by sinners, and with bitter insulting scorn nailed upon a cross, between two thieves, should have full authority given him, to summon all, both great and small, kings
and

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and judges of the earth, to appear at his bar, and receive their sentence at his mouth; than that his judge and accusers, and all the enemies and despisers of his cross, should stand trembling before him, while he sits upon the throne of his glory; that so the ignominy of the cross should be rewarded and done away by the glory and triumph of the last Judgment?

SECONDLY, Another reason why God has been pleased to commit the administration of this Judgment to Christ, was this, that he might thereby declare to all the world, the righteousness, and equity, and compassion of it; in that mankind will by this means be judged by one in their own nature, a man like themselves; and so God may be glorified in judging the world, when angels and men shall see and acknowledge the justice and equity of it. For what could mankind have desired more, if they had had the choice of their own judge, than to be judged by a man, one so nearly related to them, even their brother, one who is *bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh; one made in all things like unto them,* only without sin; one, who having himself been

tempted

tempted in all points, like as we are, can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that have been out of the way; for that he himself also had been compassed with infirmity, Heb. v. 2. One, who having lived in the midst of a wicked world, and known the conversation of mankind, and is therefore sensible of the follies, temptations, and infirmities to which they are subject; who will not therefore judge us as if we were angels, but remembering that we are but men, poor, sinful, weak men; the race of apostate man; who have a miserably corrupt nature within, and a tempting world without, to struggle withal; will undoubtedly therefore shew great pity to the weaknesses and failings of mankind, and will make all favourable allowances to them?

NAY more than this, we have not only a man to be our Judge, but one who is GOD as well as man; and this therefore does still more highly set forth to us the equity of GOD, in appointing such a one to be our Judge. For when GOD is united to man, we can have no reason to fear,
that

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that such a Judge will be too extreme in marking and punishing what is done amiss.

To all which may be added still this one thing further (and then I think nothing can more effectually declare the equity of this Judgment, and that it shall be administered in righteousness) God's ordaining that very person to sit in Judgment upon us, who came down from heaven on purpose to be the Saviour of mankind. For it is impossible, I think, for any one to imagine, that he can be a severe and unequal Judge to mankind, whose mighty love to human nature brought him down from heaven, and cloathed him with flesh and blood, and exposed him to all the sufferings and miseries of this life, and even to death itself, on purpose to fit him to be a Mediator between God and man, and to make reconciliation for us. It cannot be but that the Saviour of mankind, is more strongly inclined to *save than to destroy*: Than to destroy did I say? Far be it from the great lover of souls, that he should have any inclination to destroy. This is altogether foreign to his design; this is utterly
against

against his will. And therefore, we may be sure that he will condemn none, whom, according to the most favourable construction of the terms of the gospel, he can save. And if then we must be judged at all, what could we have desired more, nay, what could God have done more for us, than to appoint the man Christ Jesus, who is our Saviour, to be our Judge?

THIRDLY, Another thing which made it very fitting for the Son of man to be appointed the Judge of the world, is this, that he might be a visible Judge; that all the whole world might see the person by whom they are judged. Herein is manifested the great wisdom of God, in that intending to make a general Judgment of all men, whose bodies are to be raised and united again to their souls, in order to their visible appearance at this Judgment, he hath ordained a visible Judge, whom all might see that are to be judged, even the *man Christ Jesus*, 1 Tim. ii. 5. who although he be invisible, in respect of his divine nature, *For no man hath seen God at any time, nor can see*, 1 Tim. vi. 16. yet is visible
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in respect of his human nature; and as such, can as visibly judge the world, as any earthly prince or judge, when he ascends the judgment-seat.

AND this might be one reason, why the scriptures, when they speak of Christ as Judge of the world, do almost constantly call him *man*, and the *Son of man*. Thus St Matt. xiii. 41. *The Son of man shall send forth his angels;* and xvi. 27. *The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his work.* Acts xvii. 31. *He hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained:* and in many other places.

Now God judges the world in so public a manner, to convince the world of his power, and justice, and goodness, in the final destruction of all bad men, and the final rewards of all good men. And therefore, this must be a visible Judgment, and there must be a visible judgment-seat, and a visible Judge. It is fit that good men should behold the person that acquits them,
and

and that bad men should know for what they are judged, and see the hand that executes vengeance upon them: ' Whereas

' were the last Judgment to be executed

' in any other way than a visible manner,

' or by a visible Judge, it might possibly

' be thought the effect of chance and ac-

' cident, or fate; and not the result of the

' divine wisdom and counsel. If good men

' were not to appear before all the world,

' and there receive the commendations of

' their most upright Judge, for all the

' good actions they have done, and for all

' their faithful services to their God; and

' there be openly rewarded by him for all

' the hardships and miseries they had en-

' dured in this life: and if wicked men

' were not to acknowledge, in as public a

' manner, their own guilt and deserts of

' all their ungodly deeds, and accuse them-

' selves as the authors of their own misery

' and destruction, and receive a public sen-

' tence of punishment suitable to it, God

' would lose the glory of his justice, and

' of his exact righteousness, in the dispen-

' sations of his providence in this world;

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' of

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‘ of which this visible Judgment was intended as the highest vindication, before
‘ all the glorious assembly of angels and
‘ saints.’

Now as this therefore will be a matter of the greatest comfort, and joy, and triumph to the righteous, to behold their Lord and Saviour coming in the clouds of heaven, cloathed with a human body, but bright and glorious as the sun; a body, which still retains the marks of his sufferings for their sakes, and the tokens of his love; to see him with crowns of glory in his hand, and in him to see the certainty of their faith, the completion of all their hopes, the reward of their patience and sufferings, and their final conquest over death and hell: so on the other side, how terrible and confounding will it be to all bad men, who lived in ungodliness and worldly lusts, who trampled under foot the Son of God, and declared, that they *would not have this man to rule over them*; who laughed at the fable of a crucified Jesus, as they blasphemously called the history of his death and passion: who despised all his threatnings, and
mocked

mocked at a future Judgment : What dreadful horror, I say, must then needs seize their wretched souls, when they shall behold the visible appearance of the Son of man, coming attended with millions of angels to his throne of glory in the heavens, and all mankind standing before his awful tribunal, expecting their final doom from his mouth ? When they shall see him in earnest coming to judge the world, with the utmost terror in his looks ?

‘ AND is he come then indeed, will every
‘ such sinner say ; and must I be judged at
‘ last, who thought myself so secure of never
‘ coming to Judgment ? And must it
‘ be by him too, who came down from
‘ heaven, and with infinite tenderness and
‘ compassion did shed his most precious
‘ blood to save me ; but I despised, and
‘ made light of it ? Behold, I see him ;
‘ it is he himself ; and I can be an infidel
‘ no longer. But how can I appear before
‘ him as my Judge, whom I did not regard
‘ how greatly I offended every day of
‘ my life, by my profane oaths, curses,
‘ and blasphemies ? How can I expect

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‘ any favour from him, whom I have con-
 ‘ tinually reviled by my *hard speeches which*
 ‘ *I have spoken against him*, Jude 15. and
 ‘ would not have him for my Saviour?
 ‘ What account can I give of my actions,
 ‘ who never expected to be called to an ac-
 ‘ count for them? What plea can I make
 ‘ for myself, who would never believe nor
 ‘ be persuaded, that it would one day be
 ‘ thus, as I now find it is? How can I
 ‘ bear his presence, which is intolerable;
 ‘ and yet not to appear before it is impos-
 ‘ sible? For whither can I fly from him,
 ‘ or where can I think to conceal myself?
 ‘ When he condemns me, to whom can I
 ‘ appeal from the Judge of the world? O
 ‘ wretched man that I am, who would
 ‘ never think of this day, except it were
 ‘ perhaps to laugh at it and despise it; and
 ‘ now wo is me! To my utter confusion,
 ‘ I am sadly convinced that it is too true,
 ‘ and I must be condemned, irreversibly
 ‘ condemned, without redemption, to eter-
 ‘ nal misery, by the Saviour of the world!

*Of the solemnity of Christ's appearing to
be the Judge of the world.*

HAVING considered some of the reasons, as far as they appear to us, for which God was pleased to appoint the man Christ Jesus to be the Judge of the world; I shall now consider, what will be the solemnity of his appearing to that end, as it is declared to us in the holy scriptures.

Now there we find such descriptions as these of this great solemnity. Our Saviour tells us, *Matt. xvi. 27. That the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels.* St Luke ix. 26. *That the Son of man shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.* 2 Theff. i. 7, 8. It is said, *That the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in a flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:* and 1 Theff. iv. 16, 17. *That the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, which shall awaken*
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the dead, and raise them out of their graves, but the dead in Christ shall rise first. St Matt. xxv. 31—33. That when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. And again, Rev. xx. 11, 12. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away, and there was no place found for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

THE descriptions here given are, in every view and circumstance, so affecting, that I scarce believe it in the power of words to represent in livelier images, taken, as they must be, from sensible objects, what will be the real appearance of things upon that
great,

great, and terrible day of our Lord. It must indeed be beyond the reach of human imagination to conceive by the present faculties of our souls, what will be the majesty, the splendor or the terror of the Son of man, when he comes (though in the form and fashion of a man) arrayed in the highest sensible displays of divine glory, that can be revealed from heaven. When he comes with a commission of almighty authority and power from God the Father, as Governor, and Judge of the universe, and with myriads of angels as his attendants, whose archangels voice shall be the trump of God; and its sound shall be so loud, as to reach unto the ends of the world; and thus summon all mankind together, alive or dead, high or low, rich or poor, one with another, without respect of persons, to appear, bow, fall, and tremble before the tribunal of Christ: and to receive from his mouth their final and everlasting sentence to happiness or misery. For thus both he and his apostle *St Paul* express what will be seen and heard, *Matt. xxiv. 30, 31. 1 Thess. iv. 16. 2 Thess. i. 7.*

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i. 7. when that *hour*, John v. 28. is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall bear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth, they that have done good, to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation. The bodies of all men not then alive, must be raised out of their graves, and united again to their souls; that they may become perfect men again, as they were in this world; that thus every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad, 2 Cor. v. 10.

‘ LORD! with what horror and reluctance will bad souls enter into their bodies again, not to enjoy their old beloved sensualities, but to be judged for them! when the very sight of their bodies will call to mind all the villanies they acted in them! when they must appear before their Judge, with all their instruments of wickedness about them; with those very bodies, whose members they had made members of *uncleanness*, and of *iniquity unto iniquity*; with eyes full of *adultery*; with hands stained with blood, or
‘ full

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‘ full of bribes, or rapine; with a blas-
‘ pheming, lying, reviling, and perjured
‘ tongue! to unite a soul to such a body
‘ again, is like tying a man to his mur-
‘ dered friend, which will both scare his
‘ conscience, and poison him with a noi-
‘ some stench!

‘ ON the contrary, holy souls will give
‘ a better welcome to their bodies; bodies
‘ which were preserved pure and clean
‘ from all sensual lusts; which were the
‘ instruments of righteousness and virtue;
‘ which were offered up living, holy, and
‘ acceptable sacrifices to GOD; or which
‘ suffered loss, and want, and torment, and
‘ death, for the sake of Christ. In such
‘ bodies as these, good men would desire
‘ to be judged, seeing they are visible tes-
‘ timonies of their faith and patience, mor-
‘ tification and self-denial, members of
‘ Christ, and temples of the Holy Ghost.’

WHEN all things are in this readiness, then
shall appear Christ sitting on the magnificent
throne of his glory, the bright and glorious
cloud in the air, whereon he descended from
heaven, surrounded with angels, as the mi-
nisters of his justice; who, *when they have*

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gathered

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gathered all nations before him, shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats, Matt. xxv. 32. For the angels, we are told, are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation, Heb. i. 14. and therefore they know how to distinguish between good and bad men, and to separate them from each other.

WHEN this is done, when all mankind are thus placed before their Judge, to give an account of all their actions, and to receive their final sentence; then immediately shall all the books be opened, as another circumstance of this great transaction; the books, out of which all the persons there presented before the throne of Christ are to be judged. Thus it is described, *Rev. xx. 12. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. The like we have, Daniel vii. 10.*

Now as to the books, which are then to be opened, we must not think that God keeps

keeps books of record, in a literal sense, as men do; but this is only an allusion to the forms of process in human judicatures, where the things that are transacted are written down in books, ready to be looked into, and of the same evidence with living witnesses. So here, *G O D*, we are sure, exactly observes all our actions, and keeps as faithful a record of them, as if they were all written in a book of remembrance; and though we may have forgotten them ourselves and then think they are gone and past, as if we had nothing more to do with them; yet *God* perfectly remembers them all, and will at the day of Judgment bring them again fresh into our minds and consciences, and make them as visible to ourselves, and as legible to others, as if they were graven in our foreheads, or printed in a book, or attested by a thousand witnesses.

‘ *AND* how will it then amaze and confound wicked men, to have all the sins of their lives called to their remembrance! to see such a black catalogue of all their impieties and blasphemies, their injustice

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and oppression, their uncleannes and
impurities! to see an exact counterpart
of a wicked and ungodly life truly re-
presented before them! for nothing can
blot our sins out of God's book, but a
sincere repentance, and reformation of
our lives. In that case indeed, God has
promised to *blot out all our iniquities*, and
there shall then be no mention made of
them at the day of Judgment. For
thus saith God, *Ezek. xxxiii. 14, 16.*
If the wicked man turn from his sin, and
doth that which is lawful and right, none
of his sins that he hath committed shall be
mentioned unto him, he hath done that
which is lawful and right, he shall surely
live.

THE best of men have had many fail-
ings, weakneses, and miscarriages: and
some very good men have been guilty of
very great wickedneses; but then here is
their comfort, if they have sincerely and
heartily repented of them, there is another
book, as St *John* tells us, which shall be
opened at the day of Judgment, called
the book of life, out of which good men
shall

shall be judged. In this are recorded their faith, and patience, and charity, and all the good deeds they have done; but none of their sins; which, for the sake of what their Saviour Jesus Christ has done and suffered for them, God has blotted out of his book of remembrance, upon their true repentance, never to be mentioned any more to them.

ONE thing more is to be observed in this Judgment of all men, which is this; the good shall first be judged, and then the wicked. This our Saviour himself has acquainted us with, in his account of the last Judgment, *St Matt. xxv.* where he tells us, that he will first call good men, those on his right hand to Judgment, and pronounce them blessed, *ver. 34.* before he pronounces that terrible sentence upon the wicked, *Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire;* which will give the highest demonstration to all the world, that God takes more pleasure to save than to destroy. But most miserable will this be to all wicked men, and a double addition to their punishment, that they must stand by to be witnesses of

the happiness they have lost, in the glorious reward of the righteous: and then be doomed to experience their own inexpressible misery in the eternal torments of hell. O dreadful end of a wicked life! I pray GOD that none who shall read this, may ever know what it is to lose the joys of heaven, and to suffer the torments of hell!

I CANNOT but mention one thing more, which has been usually taken notice of as a most terrible attendant on the last Judgment; and that is, the dismal change which will then happen to the world, by the conflagration of it; of which St Peter speaks expressly in these words, 2 Pet. iii. 7, 10. *The heavens and the earth which are now, are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of Judgment; and ver. 10. The day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.* ‘Now what a dreadful addition will
 ‘this be to all they have seen before!
 ‘how confounding as well as surprizing a
 ‘fight

‘ sight will it be, to see all the whole world;
‘ in flames; the hills melting like wax;
‘ the sea roaring with most hideous noises;
‘ the earth trembling, and all over in con-
‘ vulsions; loud vollies of thunder, and
‘ dreadful flashes of lightning, rending the
‘ rocks and mountains asunder; the pow-
‘ ers of the heavens shaken, the sun turn-
‘ ed into darkness, and the moon into
‘ blood; and the stars all jumbled toge-
‘ ther in terrible disorder; and in short,
‘ all things in tumult and confusion, and
‘ no place for the guilty to flee unto, even
‘ to hide themselves from the astonishing
‘ countenance of their angry Judge! O
‘ let us therefore who look for such things,
‘ be diligent, that we may be found of
‘ him in peace, without spot, and blame-
‘ less; and have our fruit unto holiness
‘ now, that we may have our end ever-
‘ lasting life!’

*Who the persons are that are to be
judged.*

THE fourth thing I am to shew is,
Who the persons are that are to be
K 4 judged;

judged; and they are, all men that ever lived in the world. All the sons and daughters of *Adam*, shall be summoned to this great assize. None are so great as to be excused, none so mean as to be overlooked. No proxies or representatives will be allowed, but every one must appear in his own person, high and low, rich and poor, one with another. Now this is very plain, both from reason and from scripture.

First, From reason; and this, whether we consider the nature of man, or the nature of GOD.

1st, As we are men: we are all alike GOD's creatures, who have received all that we have from him, and do wholly depend upon him, and are entirely subject to him, to be governed by such laws, as he has thought fit to prescribe to us, and must all at last be accountable to him for our observance or violation of them. And though we have very different talents committed to our trust, yet we have every one of us some talent or other to improve for our great Master's use, of which we must give an account to him, and shall then receive

ceive reward or punishment from him, according as we have deserved well or ill by our doings.

2dly, If we consider the nature of God; it is impossible it should be otherwise; but that as none shall be exempted from the Judgment of God, so every man must receive from him reward or punishment, according as he has deserved. God being an infinitely holy, just, and righteous being, will do nothing but what is just and right to every man, for *he is no respecter of persons*. Now justice requires, that every one should have that which of due belongs to him; but of due it belongs to every reasonable creature to give an account of himself and of his actions to the great Judge of the world; and to exempt any one from this account, would be partiality; which the holy scriptures do every where remove at the greatest distance from God. 2 Chron. xix. 7. *There is, saith King Jehosaphat, no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons.* Job likewise, speaking of the impartial justice of God, chap. xxxiv. 19. says thus, *He accepteth not the persons of princes,*

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princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor, for they are all the work of his hands. Now this holy, just, and righteous God, has declared in abundance of places of his holy word, that he will judge all men.

ACCORDINGLY the scriptures do, 2dly, in many places declare this great truth; St Matt. xxv. 31, 32. *When the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, all nations shall be gathered before him.* Acts xvii. 31. *He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness.* The world, that is, all men who ever lived in it. Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 12. *We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; for it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.* Heb. ix. 27. *It is appointed for all men once to die, and after that the Judgment.* And 1 Peter iv. 5. it is said, that an account shall be given to him, who is ready to judge the quick and the dead. This expression seems to be used on purpose, to take in all persons, that have ever lived in the world; not only those who shall have been already dead

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at the coming of Christ, but those who shall be found alive at his coming; who though they shall not die, yet shall undergo a sudden and like change, as St Paul tells us, *1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. Behold, I shew you a mystery, we shall not all sleep; that is, we shall not all die, and sleep in the grave, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* They who died before, shall be raised: and they who shall then be found alive, though they shall not die, yet their bodies shall undergo the same change with those that are raised. And for this reason, Christ is often called in scripture, *the judge of the quick and dead.*

Now though this be so very plain, from these and many other places of scripture, that none, of what rank, or quality, or condition soever, shall be exempted from this universal Judgment; but that all persons, without exception, must appear before the tribunal of Christ, at that great day, and give an account of themselves and all their actions; yet it is to be feared,
that

that there are many persons, who do not think of this so frequently as they ought; or if they do think of it at some times, yet they are apt to think too favourably of their own case, and would fain persuade themselves, that their Judge will not deal so rigidly with them, as with some others; but that great allowances will be made to them at that day, either upon account of their great power, or riches, or honours; or of their great poverty, or of their youth; in which there is no doubt, but that they will all find themselves most miserably mistaken.

1st, SOME, I am afraid, are apt to persuade themselves, that great allowances will be made to them at that day, on account of their power, riches, or honours. They are, it may be, great princes and potentates: and by the honours and riches which they enjoy in the world, are exalted above the common level of mankind. And these things are apt to swell their minds with proud and vain thoughts of themselves, and to make them not only look with contempt upon all those who are below them,

but

but even to think that they do great honour to G O D himself, and a credit to religion, whenever they pay any worship to him; and that therefore much less will be accepted from them, than from other men. They hope also that God will consider their quality, and deal with them not like ordinary men, but like princes and nobles. So that if they believe they shall be judged, yet they persuade themselves, that they shall not be judged like other men; but that G O D will wink at their faults, and out of respect to their rank and quality, will excuse them from the strict observation of some of his laws, which they fancy are made only for meaner persons.

BUT how vain an imagination is this, that God will have regard to earthly greatness in judging the world? For what is this world, and all the greatness and glory of it, to him that made it? What poor little insignificant things will the greatest princes of this world appear to be in respect of God, when he shall come in glory, attended with millions of angels, to judge the world? G O D can, and does often

often punish the greatest of men in this world; and therefore there is no reason to expect, that he will not judge them in the next. ‘ Though they are accounted
 ‘ as gods on earth, yet they must die like
 ‘ men, and that puts an end to all their
 ‘ greatness. For after a little funeral pomp
 ‘ is over, and they are laid in their graves
 ‘ with a little more ceremony than the
 ‘ vulgar, they are soon forsaken of all their
 ‘ guards, and retinue, and dependants, and
 ‘ are almost as soon forgotten by them:
 ‘ and left to be a prey for the worms,
 ‘ or rottenness, as the poorest persons,
 ‘ when dead, are. And is this then the
 ‘ creature that is too great to reverence and
 ‘ worship God, and too big to be judged
 ‘ by him: whom worms shall feed upon,
 ‘ and beggars walk over his grave?’

THIS should be well considered by all rich and great men, who are apt to forget GOD and a future Judgment, that they cannot bribe GOD to have a better opinion of them than they do really deserve, as free and moral agents; for *riches profit not in the day of wrath*: no power can prevail

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vail against the almighty. They have had greater talents committed to their trust than other men have, which if they have abused, and cannot give that good account which God may justly expect from them; so much the more severe will their condemnation be, and their doom the more intolerable another day. For so says the author of the book of Wisdom, chap. vi. 5, 6, 7, 8. *A sharp Judgment shall be to them that are in high places: for mercy will soon pardon the meanest, but mighty men shall be mightily tormented. For he who is Lord over all, shall fear no man's person: neither shall he stand in awe of any man's greatness; for he hath made the small and great, and careth for all alike. But a sore trial shall come upon the mighty. And to whom much is given, of them will be much required.*

2dly, As the rich and great are too apt to presume upon some favourable allowances being made to them at the day of Judgment, on account of their riches and greatness: so likewise are poor men, on account of their poverty, too apt to think themselves not so much concerned in it, as some others may be. ‘What, say they,
‘should

‘ should GOD judge them for, whom he
‘ has intrusted with little or nothing but
‘ their lives : and to preserve those, they
‘ are oftentimes put to exceeding hard
‘ shifts, and are forced to spend their days
‘ in labour and sorrow ? Must they be ac-
‘ countable for not worshipping GOD daily,
‘ as the rich indeed may very well be, be-
‘ cause they are greatly indebted to him,
‘ for the bountiful provision of all things
‘ which he has made for them, and they
‘ have time enough and to spare to do it
‘ in ; but as for themselves, all the time
‘ they have, is little enough to get bread
‘ for themselves and families : and it would
‘ be very hard indeed, if when they should
‘ give a little loose to themselves, and
‘ should indulge themselves in mirth, in
‘ order to forget their wants and miseries
‘ for some few moments, they must be
‘ punished severely for it hereafter.’ By
such kind of excuses as these, poor men
may indeed flatter themselves, that they
shall escape being called to an account
hereafter for such small faults as they are
willing to think theirs are. But it will be
well

well for them, if they do not find themselves greatly mistaken at last in this matter.

FOR let us seriously consider it; are not poor men reasonable creatures, as well as the great and rich: and as such then, are they not able to give an account of their actions, as well as other men are? And why then should not GOD call them to an account for them? He will not indeed examine them about their almsgiving, because they had nothing to give: nor will he demand an account of them how they have used the riches which they had not.

‘ But they may, and must give an account
‘ to God, in what manner they have born
‘ their poverty; whether they have been
‘ humble and modest under it, and born
‘ it with contentedness, patience, and submission to the good will of GOD; and
‘ when their necessities have been supplied
‘ by his good providence, and the charity
‘ of others, whether they have received it
‘ with thankfulness to God, and to their
‘ benefactors. - He can and will enquire,
‘ whether they have been just, and honest,
‘ and faithful to them that have entrusted
‘ them; and have been sober, temperate,

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‘ and

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* and chaste in their lives, and with dili-
 * gence and industry endeavoured to sup-
 * port their families; and whether they
 * have been constant and devout in wor-
 * shipping of G O D on his holy day; and
 * have given good examples to their chil-
 * dren of virtue and good manners at other
 * times; and have not only lived in the
 * fear of G O D themselves, but have used
 * their best endeavours to bring up their
 * children in the same. Whether they
 * have constantly prayed to G O D for the
 * supply of their wants, as well as begged
 * alms of men, and with modesty implor-
 * ed the help and assistance of the rich.
 These, and many such like, are duties
 which poor men ought to exercise, and
 which G O D therefore may very justly de-
 mand an account of from them, and judge
 them for the neglect of them.

A N D for this reason, they ought fre-
 quently to consider, that they are G O D's
 creatures as well as the rich; and that there
 is a time certainly coming, when they
 must give an account to G O D, how they
 have behaved themselves in their station in
 this world, as well as all other men must do
 how

how they have behaved themselves in theirs. And if according to their knowledge and other abilities they have done well, they shall have an infinite amends made them for all the wants and necessities they have endured and struggled with in this world, by a glorious and eternal reward in the next. But if they have been wanting to those duties, which God might well expect from them in their station, and have done ill, their poverty and want shall not be taken for an excuse for them, but they shall be judged and condemned to have their portion with the ungodly and unprofitable servants in the other world, *in outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*, Matt. xxv. 'For justice requires, that God should respect no man's person in Judgment. And to convince the world of this, it seems reasonable to suppose, that he will not only judge us all alike, but will judge us all together, to make it appear to all the whole world, how impartial he is in his Judgment to all mankind.'

3dly, THERE are still yet further some other persons, who seem to hope that they

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shall find great favour from God in that day, and they are young persons. These will probably be apt to say, ' That they ' being brought into a world full of temptations on every side, before ever they ' could well know and consider the evil ' and danger of them, they were hurried ' by the warmth of their tempers and the ' giddiness of their spirits, to make a trial ' of them; to see what pleasure there was ' to be found in them: and then too being every way encompassed with the examples of others, who gave themselves, ' without any check, the free liberty of ' indulging in the gratifications of their ' senses; or perhaps being prevailed upon ' by the persuasions of such, as they accounted their friends, to accompany them ' in the enjoyment of worldly pleasures, ' they grew by degrees a little too fond of ' them, and could not easily withstand their ' temptations afterwards: and for these reasons, they are induced to hope, that God ' will at the last day make great allowances ' for such a weak and deceivable state of ' human nature, and not exact so strict and ' severe an account from them, as from ' those of riper years.'

THESE

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THESE and such like are the pleas, which are usually alledged in favour of the younger part of mankind. And we have great reason to think, that so far as there is any thing truly allowable in them, the great Judge of the world, who is infinitely merciful, as well as infinitely just, where it is reasonable for compassion to be shewn, will not be extreme to animadvert, with the utmost severity, on his poor, fallible, and weak creatures; but for the sake of the infinite satisfaction made to the justice of God, by their most holy and perfect Redeemer, will incline to afford some gracious allowances for faults which are not in a high degree deliberate, wilful, and presumptuous. But when young persons are advanced to a riper degree of understanding, and a better knowledge of things, every body then expects from them, that they should put away childish things, and not allow themselves in such freakish and unreasonable liberties and extravagancies, as are manifestly inconsistent with their duty to God and men: and should so order their conversation, that they may not deliberately offend against either. If, as young
as

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as they are, it is evident to every one, that they know when they do their duty, and when they transgress it; they are then certainly capable of giving an account of their actions, and this makes it fit for G O D to call them to an account for them; or when will it be fit for him to do it?

A N D indeed, how can it be thought unreasonable, that G O D should judge and punish young persons, when the wisdom of all nations has thought it just, and prudent, and reasonable to do so? Thus we see it frequently done, that human courts will judge and condemn young men, as well as others; and execute them too, when they are wilfully guilty of the breach of human laws: and is it reasonable then to hope, that G O D will not judge them for their enormous crimes and offences against his laws? Is it fit that G O D should suffer young men to live as they list, to indulge their lusts and appetites, and take their fill of sensual pleasures, and commit all manner of villanies without restraint? Can it become a wise and holy G O D to grant indulgences to deliberate vice? Are adulteries,

adulteries, fornications, drunkenness, gluttony, profaneness, irreligion, or the like, as nothing, when committed by young men? Can any one give a good reason, why a man of forty or fifty years of age should be damned for those sins, if they were indulged in one of twenty?

It is really a great instance of God's mercy, to younger persons, and an argument of his infinite wisdom in governing the world, that he has declared he will call them, as well as older persons, to an account for the irregularities of their lives and actions. The notice of this beforehand may engage them to consider well the nature of their actions, in order to prevent them from being guilty of such sins as would endanger the ruin of their souls to all eternity.

‘FOR how seldom is it seen, that they
‘ who indulge themselves in vicious courses
‘ in their youth, and so by degrees contract habits of wickedness, do ever get
‘ a perfect mastery over them, or prove
‘ seriously religious afterwards; and those
‘ that do, with what difficulty is that victory gained? And therefore, if God intends

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“tends we should worship and obey him
“when we are men (as certainly he does)
“he must lay early restraints upon us, and
“oblige us to fashion our minds to piety
“and virtue betimes. And that is a rea-
“son why he should declare that he will
“judge youth, and so antidote them a-
“gainst the flattering temptations of this
“life, with the hopes and fears of another
“world. If any one thinks it hard, that
“God should judge him for the lewdness
“and extravagancies of youth; let him con-
“sider, whether it would not be much
“harder to suffer him to be corrupted when
“he is young, and to damn him for con-
“tinuing wicked when he is old. The
“fears of judgment may restrain and go-
“vern youthful persons, and season them
“with the principles of an early piety,
“which will by degrees grow up into such
“confirmed habits of virtue, as will then
“direct and govern their lives in this
“world, and carry them safe to heaven af-
“terwards. But if young men might sin
“securely in their younger years, without
“fear of Judgment, in all likelihood they
“would sin on till they were old enough
“to be damned.”

THEN

THEN again, young men have in truth as little reason to expect, that they shall be excused from being judged, and from giving an account of their actions, as that any other men whatsoever should be excused from it. Their reason indeed at first is weak, but it is not corrupted by evil principles, as that of old sinners is. God has planted in the minds of young persons a natural sense of religion, with an awe and reverence for his justice and providence, and a natural belief of another world: and he has also to these joined a strong degree of modesty, to check them when they are tempted to sin; and of shame, to reprove and correct them when they have complied with it; which are all oftentimes very much defaced, and almost quite worn out in old sinners. Nay, moreover, the fear of God will more easily restrain a curiosity to sin, than conquer a settled habit of it. And therefore young persons have a more easy task to keep themselves innocent, than old sinners have to conquer their vicious habits, who must *pluck out a right eye, and cut off a right hand*, to enter into

M heaven.

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heaven. ‘ Now all these things being well
 ‘ considered, why should young men think
 ‘ that they shall not be judged for break-
 ‘ ing through all these restraints, when it
 ‘ is in truth almost as hard a thing for
 ‘ them to be bad, as it is for others to be
 ‘ good? why should they hope to escape
 ‘ as to those sins, for which, all men own,
 ‘ others shall be judged and condemned?’

CONSIDERING then that this will certainly be the case with young men, as well as those that are more advanced in years; how greatly does it behove them to think very frequently and very seriously of Judgment, lest they should in that great day be found altogether wanting, and unprepared for it?

Young men, I am afraid, are too, too apt to forget this main concern of theirs, a future Judgment. Or if sickness, or some other sad accident should chance to bring it into their minds sometimes, they are willing to drive away such melancholy thoughts again as soon as may be, and choose rather to *rejoice in their youth, and to let their hearts cheer them in the days of their*

their youth; and are for walking in the ways of their hearts, and in the sight of their eyes. But if they will do so, the wise man has told them what they must expect in the conclusion, *Know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into Judgment,* Eccles. xi. 9. This will certainly be the end of all their mirth and jollity; that will *pass away like a tale that is told*, and never be heard more; but what remains will be a sad account to be given of all their frolicks and delights, if they have offended God by them, as ten thousand to one but they have often done. There will then be an end of them all; the scene must change, when they must pay very dear for all their short sinful mirth and pleasures, and be confined to a dismal place of darkness and horror, there to suffer the just effects of God's displeasure, *in weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth for ever.*

If therefore young men would be wise for themselves, and prevent all this, let them take the same wise man's advice, *Eccles. xii. 1.* and *remember their creator in the days of their youth:* and consecrate their tender age to his service. Let them begin

betimes to think of Judgment, and govern their lives under a due sense of it. This will not hinder them from taking pleasure in their lives, but help them to be more prudent in the choice of it. This will direct them to the most solid and substantial pleasure of all that can be had in this world, even to the testimony of a good conscience, while it helps to preserve them from youthful lusts, and all other follies, which may endanger the loss of the favour of God.

N A Y, early thoughts of Judgment, will enable them to make greater advances and attainments in piety and virtue, which will greatly augment their reward hereafter. But when men sin on to old age, should they prove true penitents at last, which is exceeding hard, and exceeding hazardous too, they can never recover this lost time in their christian race. At the best, they must look forward with fear and trembling into the other world. For such late penitents, do usually carry the marks of their repentance in shame and sorrow to their graves. But those that begin their lives
aright,

aright, and pursue a steady course of piety and virtue in the fear of God all their lives long, by keeping continually a future Judgment in their view; what great improvements may they not make, and what glorious rewards may they not expect from their righteous Judge? In short, this will lay the most sure foundation of peace and comfort within their hearts while they live: and when they come to die, will give them such an humble assurance of mercy from God, at the great day of accounts, as will make them to welcome even death itself, *with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*

What are all persons to be judged for.

I Proceed now to the fifth thing which I proposed to speak to in treating of this subject, a future Judgment; and that is, to consider what the persons are to be judged for, who shall appear before *the judgment-seat of Christ.*

THE answer to this in general, is very plain, from the words of *St Paul*, 2 Cor.

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v. 10. *We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

The meaning of which words is this;

‘ That all men whatsoever shall be accountable at the day of Judgment for all the things they have done in this life, while they were in this world, in this state of union of the soul and body: and shall receive the due recompence and reward of them, whether they were good, or whether they were evil.’ These are

usually comprehended under these three general heads, of thoughts, words, and actions.

First, We must all be accountable for our thoughts; which are the inward acts of our minds. Such are all the secret designs, purposes, and intentions, which we have cherished and entertained in them; all which shall be considered and examined at the last day; and we shall be judged for them, as well as for our outward actions. For *God is the searcher of hearts*, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. and *the discerner of the thoughts*, Psal. cxxxix. 1, 2. and *understandeth all our imaginations*.

imaginations. Nothing that is conceived in our minds, can be hidden from his all-seeing eye; our hearts to him are as open as the most public actions of our lives. And it is certain we may sin with our minds and spirits, as well as with our bodies. For God, who is a spirit, requires the worship and obedience of our minds and spirits, being offended with sinful and impure thoughts, as well as with wicked actions.

‘ IF we therefore frequently cherish in
‘ our minds any wanton, lewd, and lustful
‘ desires, and please ourselves with impure
‘ fancies and imaginations: if we secretly
‘ harbour in our hearts any malicious and
‘ revengeful purposes, and contrive and
‘ wish for opportunities to effect them,
‘ though by some accident or other we are
‘ prevented from executing our designs
‘ and intentions; yet we are, in the sight
‘ and esteem of God, as accountable for
‘ them, as if we had actually put our de-
‘ signs in execution. For he that would
‘ do ill, but wants means and opportunity
‘ for it, contracts the same guilt in the
‘ sight of God, as if the thing had been
M 4 ‘ actually

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‘ actually committed, because his mind
 ‘ approves of, and consents to it. Thus
 ‘ our Saviour has given us his determina-
 ‘ tion in a case of the like nature; *Who so-*
 ‘ *ever looketh upon a woman to lust after her,*
 ‘ *hath committed adultery with her already*
 ‘ *in his heart,* St Matt. v. 28.’

AND as it is with criminal actions in-
 tended only, and not fulfilled, that they
 shall be brought to account at the day of
 Judgment, and punished according to the
 demerit of them: so shall it also be with
 relation to the good intentions of the heart.

‘ Whosoever has a sincere desire and dis-
 ‘ position in his heart to do good, and
 ‘ would gladly accomplish it, if he could,
 ‘ though he should be hindered from it,
 ‘ yet he will be esteemed by GOD, to
 ‘ have all the merit which those desires, if
 ‘ they had been fully effected, could have
 ‘ given him, and shall have his good in-
 ‘ tentions considered and rewarded at the
 ‘ day of Judgment.’

Secondly, We must be accountable for
 our words. This our Saviour himself has
 assured us of, that we shall be judged for
 our words: St *Matt.* xii. 36, 37. *But I say*

unto

unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of Judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. ‘ And indeed, what can men
‘ more deserve to be judged for than their
‘ words, their vain, idle, and wicked
‘ words, than which nothing does more
‘ mischief in the world, as little as some
‘ men make of them? What can shew a
‘ greater contempt of God, than for men
‘ to call God to witness, upon every trifling occasion, to their lyes and falshoods,
‘ by their horrid oaths? What more profane, than to call upon God to damn
‘ themselves and others, at almost every
‘ word they speak? What tends more to
‘ corrupt mens morals and lives, than lewd,
‘ wanton, and filthy talk, than atheistical
‘ discourfes, and profane jests upon religion
‘ and the holy scriptures! Does not St Paul
‘ tell us, that *evil communications corrupt*
‘ *good manners?* 1 Cor. xv. 33. What
‘ makes more divisions in the world, and
‘ creates greater disturbances to neighbours, and families, and private persons,
‘ than

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' than flandering, and backbiting, and tale-
 ' bearing? And can we then think it fit
 ' that all this should pass for nothing at
 ' the Judgment of the great day? May
 ' not every one of us rather trembling say,
 ' What shall I do, if GOD shall enter into
 ' Judgment with me for every idle word?
 ' O blessed GOD, what shall become of
 ' them who love not only *foolish talking*
 ' *and jesting, which are not convenient*, but
 ' to *speak evil one of another*; Ephes. v. 4.
 ' James iv. 11. to slander, to backbite, to
 ' create disturbances; and to raise divisions
 ' among their neighbours? How then
 ' should we sadly remember and heartily
 ' repent of it, when we have done thus?
 ' How highly fit is it, that these things
 ' should be well considered by us since
 ' by our words, as well as by our deeds,
 ' we shall stand or fall? What reason have
 ' we to fear the sentence of that day, who
 ' have so frequently sinned with our
 ' tongues, that if there were no other sins
 ' to be then accounted for, we have enough
 ' on this account to make us fear the event
 ' of that terrible sentence? O let this con-
 ' sideration teach us to set a guard on our
 ' lips,

‘ lips, and to watch over our tongues, with
‘ a care, as near as we can, equal to that
‘ fear, which shall be at doomsday, where
‘ we are to pass our last accounts.’

‘ *Thirdly*, We must be accountable for
‘ our actions in general, all our civil as
‘ well as religious actions; for our beha-
‘ viour towards men, in all our dealings
‘ and intercourse with them; as well as
‘ for our demeanour towards God, in the
‘ duties of his more immediate worship
‘ and service? for those of lesser moment
‘ and consequence, as well as for those of
‘ greater weight and concernment. And
‘ in particular, for all the sinful actions
‘ we have done in secret, in the greatest
‘ darkness and privacy, as well as for those
‘ which were done in public, and in the
‘ open view and sight of the world; for
‘ our sins of omission, as well as for those
‘ of commission: for the sins to which we
‘ have tempted others, and for those which
‘ we did not endeavour to prevent in them,
‘ when it was in our power to have done
‘ so, as well as for our own.’

1st, For all our sinful actions, which
were done never so secretly, as well as for
those

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those which were done in public, will a strict account be required of us at that day. So the wise man tells us, *Eccles. xii. 14. God will bring every work into Judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* So likewise says our Saviour, *There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed, neither hid, that shall not be known,* St Matt. x. 26. Men are apt to think themselves safe enough, if they can but escape the eye of men, and commit their sins secretly and in the dark; then they think all is well, and that they shall hear no more of them. But alas! this their cunning is their folly too, since *the darkness hideth not from God, but the night shineth as the day, the darkness and the light are both alike to him,* Psal. cxxxix. 12. Has not the apostle told us, *Heb. iv. 13. That all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do?* Nay, hath not God himself said, *Jer. xxiii. 24. Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? He seeth the very secrets of the heart,* which no eye but his can pierce into. And when God knows our most secret
sins,

‘ sins, why should he not judge us for
‘ them? though such sins may escape the
‘ judgment of men, yet they cannot escape
‘ the judgment of GOD. He has noted
‘ them all down in a book of remembrance,
‘ and will call such secret sinners to a se-
‘ vere account for them, when they shall
‘ be made manifest in the great day of re-
‘ velation, and be laid open in the face of
‘ the whole world.’

‘ CONSIDER therefore now, O thou se-
‘ cret sinner, how thou wilt be confound-
‘ ed in the day of Judgment, when thy
‘ secret baseness and lewdness, thy mid-
‘ night revels, the hypocrisies of thy heart,
‘ thy lustful thoughts, and treacherous de-
‘ signs, thy falshood to GOD, thy breaches
‘ of thy holy promises, and vows of
‘ amendment, thy follies and impieties,
‘ shall be laid open before all the world:
‘ and that then shall be spoken by the
‘ trumpet of an angel, upon the highest
‘ battlements of heaven, all those filthy
‘ words, and lewd circumstances, which
‘ thou didst act secretly; and it shall ap-
‘ pear to the whole world how vile thou
‘ hast been, who didst endeavour to hide
‘ all

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‘ all this from the eyes of men. Consider,
 ‘ I beseech thee, with what confusion of
 ‘ face, thou wouldst stand in the presence
 ‘ of a good man that should be austere in
 ‘ marking what thou dost amiss; if per-
 ‘ adventure he should suddenly draw thy
 ‘ curtain, and find thee in the sins of shame
 ‘ and lust. It must be infinitely more so,
 ‘ when God, and all the angels of hea-
 ‘ ven, and all his redeemed saints, shall
 ‘ behold and wonder at thy impurities and
 ‘ follies, which thou tookest such pains to
 ‘ hide from the eyes of men. Remem-
 ber, therefore, now in this thy day, what
 an intolerable shame thy sinful life, though
 never so secret, as well as that which is
 never so open and barefaced, will bring
 thee to at God’s day; ‘ when all that is
 ‘ excellent in heaven and earth shall be
 ‘ summoned as witnesses and parties in a
 ‘ fearful scrutiny into thy behaviour:’ and
 unless thou wastest away all thy sins, thy
 secret, as well as more open ones, now by
 a sincere repentance, they will provoke thy
 Judge to pass a severe sentence upon thee,
 never to be reversed hereafter.

2dly, WE must be accountable at the last day for all our sins of omission, as well as commission; for the wilful neglects and omissions of our duty, as well as for our manifest, open, and positive breaches of it. Many men are apt to think, that if they do but abstain from notorious and scandalous sins, though they take no care to improve their souls in piety and virtue; if they are so far innocent, as to do nobody any great harm, though they have no manner of concernment to do good; either to the souls or bodies of men; if they do not so constantly serve God, and frequent his public worship upon his holy day, as others do; yet if they live but indifferently sober, as they call it, and now and then say a short prayer by themselves; they think that this sort of negative virtue and goodness will serve their turn at the day of Judgment.

BUT the matter is quite otherwise, as our Saviour has expressly declared in two of his parables, that of the foolish virgins, and that of the talents, *St Matt. xxv.* In the former he has declared, the dangerous state of those, who slumber away their
lives

lives in a drowsy inactivity, and are not careful *to keep any oil in their lamps*; that is, to keep alive grace in their hearts, or to shew forth *the light of good works in their conversation*; they shall therefore be shut out of the kingdom of God. In the latter, he passes a most severe sentence upon that slothful servant, who *hid his Lord's talent in a napkin, and buried it in the earth*, without making any manner of improvement of it, *ver. 30. Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

MEN will be required at the last day, to answer for all the opportunities and abilities, which God has put into their hands of doing good: and severely must they account for it, if they have shamefully and wilfully neglected them. Riches, and power, and knowledge, are excellent talents, which God has entrusted some men withal, in a much greater measure than he has done others; and from these he expects suitable improvements for his own glory, and the good of mankind: and where they have been wanting to employ them
for

for those excellent purposes, he will punish them accordingly; for *unto whom much is given, of them much will be required*, St Luke xii. 48. For instance, they to whom God has given great riches, he has thereby made them his stewards, to dispense those great riches for the benefit of mankind; for the support of the poor, and the relief of the indigent and necessitous, the fatherless and widows, and to promote many other excellent purposes of his good providence, whereby his holy name may be honoured in the world. But if rich men spend them only upon their lusts, in rioting, luxury, and wantonness, and shamefully waste their great Master's goods, without doing any good at all, or very little in proportion with them; he will certainly judge such unprofitable servants, and condemn them for such an infamous abuse of their talents.

So likewise, if they to whom God has committed great power and authority over others, as princes, magistrates, parents, and masters of families, instead of doing good to all that are under them, by good examples and good instructions, by vindi-

N

cating

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cating the injured, righting the oppressed, encouraging the good and virtuous, and by suppressing, restraining and punishing the vicious, they do abuse their power, and employ it to other ends, or quite contrary ones, than GOD designed; (which certainly was to make those under their authority obedient to GOD, which is the true use and improvement of power) this will be a heavy charge upon them, when GOD comes to require an account of them, and will greatly increase their punishment at that day, for so grossly abusing the trust committed to them.

THE case will likewise be the same with those, who are endued with greater degrees of knowledge than others; GOD expects from them that they should be faithful to the trust reposed in them, and use their best endeavours to advance his honour and glory in the world, and the general welfare and happiness of mankind: or they will find their slothful omissions and neglects of their duty, not to be such slight and venial sins as many may imagine them to be; but such as will call down the heavy
displeasure

displeasure of their Judge at that great day, and provoke him to reject them from mercy with this sad reproof, *I know you not, depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.*

3dly, WE must be accountable for the sins of others, to which we may by any means have given occasion, as also for those which we did not endeavour to prevent in others, when it was in our power to do it, as well as for our own. We shall be judged, not only for our own personal sins, but in many cases for the sins of other men, which we have any way made our own. For there are a great many ways, whereby we may partake of other mens sins, and bring their guilt upon ourselves. ‘ As for instance, when we
‘ tempt and provoke others to sin, by our
‘ authority, counsel, or example; when we
‘ persuade, entice, threaten, and shame
‘ men into sin; when we are partners with
‘ them in their wickedness, or are the in-
‘ struments of it; when we endeavour to
‘ corrupt the understandings of weak per-
‘ sons with pernicious and wicked princi-
‘ ples; when we endeavour to weaken the
‘ motives to their obedience by insinuating

‘ that the dangers of sin are not so great
‘ as the gospel has represented them ; all
‘ which have a fatal efficacy towards the
‘ corruption of mens manners.’ Now
whatever wickedness men are tempted to
be guilty of by such means as these, it is
chargeable upon ourselves, and will be
added to our account another day, as it is
but reasonable it should be. For if we are
the cause of other mens sins, we must bear
the guilt of them too.

IT is not unlikely, but that God will
so order it, that those who have had any
relation, or concern together in this life ;
those who have by any means been instru-
mental towards debauching their neigh-
bours ; those who have tempted, enticed,
or betrayed others into sin ; and those who
have been tempted by them, the compa-
nions and partners in the same follies, may
at the day of Judgment be ranged as it
were in view, and brought again to an
acquaintance with each other, and then each
of them will have their own condemnation
aggravated, in proportion as their wicked
enticements have prevailed to persuade
others

others to the violation of God's Commandments.

‘ AND what a horrible meeting then
‘ will this be, to see before their eyes the
‘ partners in their sins, and them that drank
‘ the round, when they crowned their head
‘ with folly and forgetfulness, and their
‘ cups with wine and riotings? What will
‘ they be able to say in excuse for them-
‘ selves, when they shall behold those poor
‘ souls, stand trembling before the dread-
‘ ful tribunal of the great Judge of the
‘ world, whom they tempted to adultery,
‘ whoredom, and wantonness, to drunken-
‘ ness, and perjury, and rebellion, by power
‘ or craft, by witty discourses, or deep dis-
‘ sembling, by evil example, or pernicious
‘ counsel? For tho’ we may now make
‘ but light account concerning these things,
‘ yet it will be a fearful circumstance of ap-
‘ pearing, to hear one or two, or ten, or twen-
‘ ty unhappy souls, cursing us as the cause
‘ of that eternal misery into which they are
‘ just going to be plunged by our means.
‘ Our lust, it may be, betrayed and rifled
‘ the weak and unguarded innocence of
‘ some

' some young women ; our example made
 ' our servants confidently to lye, or to be
 ' perjured ; our company brought others
 ' into intemperance, or the disguises of a
 ' beast. And when we see those souls,
 ' with whom we did sin, condemned to
 ' hell, well may we fear to drink the dregs
 ' of their intolerable potion. For most
 ' certainly, it is the greatest of evils to de-
 ' stroy souls, for whom the Lord Jesus
 ' died ; and to undo that grace which our
 ' Lord purchased with so much sweat, and
 ' blood, and pain, upon the cross.'

' LET us, who are still in the land of
 ' the living, consider very seriously, that
 ' though by the mercy of G O D, our life
 ' has still been spared, yet the mischief of
 ' our sin is gone before us ; the soul of
 ' our brother or friend, whom we tempt-
 ' ed to sin, is perhaps sealed up to an
 ' eternal sorrow. And who shall pay for
 ' this loss ? A soul is lost by thy means ;
 ' thou hast defeated the holy purposes of
 ' thy Lord's bitter passion by thy impuri-
 ' ties ; and what shall happen to thee, by
 ' whom thy brother died eternally ?'

THIS

THIS is a most fearful circumstance indeed, but yet there is one comfort relating to it, ' That those who are confederate in
' the same fortunes, and interests, and actions, may yet have a different sentence.
' For an early and an active repentance will
' cancel this account, and nail it to the
' cross. And though it ought to make
' us diligent, careful, charitable and penitent, extremely penitent, even as long as
' we live, yet when we shall appear together at the last day, there is a mercy,
' that shall then separate us, who had
' sometimes joined each other in a common crime. Blessed be the mercies of
' God, who hath so carefully provided a
' fruitful shower of grace, to wash away
' the guilt, and to relieve the miseries and
' dangers of a great part of mankind !'

AGAIN, beside those whom we have directly tempted to sin, there may be others, in whom we have not endeavoured to prevent it, when it was in our power, and for whose sins therefore we must be answerable, in some sort, *at the judgment-seat of Christ* ; ' such are those, who being under
' our

‘ our government, we did not take care
 ‘ to relieve there spiritual wants ; as sup-
 ‘ pose of our children and domestic ser-
 ‘ vants ; but neglected our duty to them,
 ‘ and did not instruct them better, and
 ‘ forewarn them of the danger they were
 ‘ in, of being miserable in this world, and
 ‘ in the next; whom we did not restrain
 ‘ from sin when we ought to have done
 ‘ it, by correcting and punishing them for
 ‘ their sins. How will it cut us to the
 ‘ heart, and pierce us to the very soul, to
 ‘ have them challenge us in the great day
 ‘ of the Lord, and say to us, one by one,
 ‘ Had you been as careful to teach me
 ‘ the good knowledge of the Lord, as I
 ‘ was capable of learning it; had you been
 ‘ as forward to instruct me in my duty, as
 ‘ I was ready to have learnt it, it had not
 ‘ been with me as it is this day. I had
 ‘ been now in a state of salvation, and not
 ‘ stood trembling here, in a fearful expec-
 ‘ tation of my impending doom ?”

LET us therefore now consider in time,
 how greatly it concerns us to be solicitous
 about the fate of those souls, whom we
 may

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may have subjected to sin and death, by our carelessness and negligence, and wilful omissions for their good. For many of those sentences, which have been past and decreed concerning our departed relations, will concern us nearly, and bring upon us a forer punishment, unless we repent for our own sins, and double our sorrows for their damnation.

‘ AND thus we see what the articles
‘ are, for which we must be accountable
‘ at the great day, our thoughts and in-
‘ tentions, as well as our words and ac-
‘ tions; for those which were done in se-
‘ cret, and with the greatest privacy, as
‘ well as for those which were done in
‘ public, and in the open view of the
‘ world: for the sins we have done in our
‘ own persons, and for what others have
‘ done by our countenance, or from the
‘ influence of our counsel or example, or
‘ what we ought to have prevented or
‘ hindered by our power and authority,
‘ but did not. All these things will be
‘ surveyed and searched into, and weighed
‘ in an equal balance at that day, that we
‘ O may

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‘ may receive a reward or punishment
‘ proportionable to them.’

AND if so, what ought in reason to be more powerful with us, to beget in us a strict care and conscience of all our thoughts, words, and actions, than this; ‘ To reflect, ‘ that after a little while, when a few days ‘ or years more are over, all that ever we ‘ did in this world, shall be strictly examined and looked into, and be approved or condemned, by the impartial Judgment of God?’ Since we are assured that there is a most exact register kept of our lives and actions, how circumspect ought we to be, *what manner of persons we are in all holy conversation and godliness?* How much does it concern you to take heed to our ways, to keep our hearts with all diligence, to set a watch before the door of our lips, that we may never offend with our tongue? The wise man’s advice would be very proper for every one of us to have always in our thoughts; *Fear God, and keep his commandments, for God will bring every work into Judgment, and every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, Eccles. xii. 13, 14.*

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*What will be the consequence of this
Judgment.*

I Proceed now to the last thing which I proposed to consider upon this great and momentous subject, *viz.* What will be the consequence of this Judgment. That undoubtedly will be the sentence which shall be passed upon all men, according to the nature and quality of their actions done in this world, whether good or evil. Good shall be rewarded to the good, and evil to the evil. For thus says our Saviour, *Matthew xvi. 27. The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works.* And *Rev. xxii. 12. Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.* And *St John v. 28, 29. The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth. They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.* And *St Matt. xxv. 34.* this our Saviour has assured us
O 2 shall

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shall be the sentence passed on the righteous at the last day; *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:* and on the wicked, *ver. 41. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* And *ver. 46.* speaking of the wicked, he says, *These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.* This then can by no means be doubted of, since Christ himself, who is to be the Judge, has told us, that thus it shall be.

Now since we are assured that a sentence of everlasting happiness, or everlasting misery, will be past upon all mankind, at the last day, according as they shall have deserved in this world; what care does it behove every one of us now to take, that we may be of the number of the happy, and not of the miserable? And yet so blind and inconsiderate is the greatest part of mankind, that in a matter of this vast moment to them, they appear to make this the least part of their care and business in this world! Men are generally very solicitous to advance their fortunes in the world,

world, to be rich and great, to be in a healthful and prosperous condition: and do with all possible care seek to avoid all sickness, and poverty, and meanness; but few are concerned to be virtuous and good, and to avoid vice and wickedness; whereas the moral differences of men will be the only things that will be taken into consideration at the day of Judgment. Other things will not profit us in the day of wrath. As to all civil differences, they will then vanish and be of no account, as to exempting any man from Judgment, or procuring him any favour or respect therein. For God, at that day, will not proceed with men according to their outward quality and condition in this life. Their eternal state shall not then be decided according to their wealth or power, their greatness or meanness in this world. 'It
' will not then avail them, what large estates
' they were possessed of; what high offices
' they bore in the state; what titles of honour
' they were distinguished by; what
' manors or lordships they were owners
' of: but the great inquiry will be, how
O 3 ' they

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‘ they behaved themselves in those circum-
 ‘ stances; what use they made of their
 ‘ wealth and power; what good or evil
 ‘ they have done; whether they have glo-
 ‘ rified G O D, and served the great and
 ‘ wise ends of their creation: whether they
 ‘ have obeyed or disobeyed the truth;
 ‘ whether they have lived in ungodliness
 ‘ and worldly lusts, or soberly, righteously,
 ‘ and godly in this present world. In a
 ‘ word, whether they have been righteous
 ‘ or wicked. This will be the great in-
 ‘ quiry at that day; and according to those
 ‘ qualities in us, so shall our condition be
 ‘ determined for ever.’

ANOTHER thing ought to be well con-
 sidered by us, that our reward or punish-
 ment shall then be adjusted in proportion
 to the greater degree of good or evil we
 have done. There is all the reason in the
 world that thus it should be, that they who
 have done more good, should be more
 plentifully rewarded by the justice of God,
 than they that have done less: and that
 they who have been more egregiously wick-
 ed, should have their torment encreased
 in proportion to the greater aggravation of
 their

their sins. Our Saviour hath plainly intimated this to us, where he tells us, *That the servant who knew his Lord's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew it not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes,* St Luke xii. 47, 48. And greater sinners, we are assured, *shall receive a greater damnation,* St Matt. xxiii. 14.

THIS is a mighty argument to good men, to endeavour to grow in grace, and to press forward towards perfection in goodness and holiness, with all their might; since according to the degree of their service and obedience to G O D, they are assured that such shall be the degree of their glory and happiness hereafter. For we have a good Master, who will consider every thing that we do for him, for *he is not unrighteous, to forget our work and labour of love,* Heb. vi. 10. and will not let the least service pass unrewarded. Tho' no degree of holiness can properly merit everlasting life and happiness, yet greater degrees of holiness, will certainly be rewarded with a larger portion of happiness, since

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GOD, in his infinite goodness and mercy, has promised to *reward every man according to his work.*

ON the other hand, it is most certain, that some sins are more heinous in themselves than others, and are attended with heavier aggravations in some persons than in others; and these do inflame hell, and heat that furnace seven times hotter. Such egregious sinners, as sin above the common rate of men, with full consent and deliberation, in despite of the clearest convictions; these take hell as it were by violence, and shall not be punished at the common rate of sinners, but shall sink into a deeper degree of misery; for such mighty transgressors shall be mightily tormented. Oh that these things may be most seriously considered by all men!

AND yet there is one thing more, which ought to be often thought upon, and more duly to be weighed by us christians. Our obligations to our duty to God have been far greater, than those of any other men whatsoever upon the face of the earth. We have by the infinite mercy of God to us, been graciously distinguished from all
those

those vast numbers of poor souls, which are still *in darkness and in the shadow of death*. We have had (for our greater encouragement to holiness and virtue) life and immortality most clearly brought to light to us, by the preaching of the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the means plainly made known to us, whereby we might be saved: as well as the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, on purpose to deter us from them. And if we, to whom this glorious light has been vouchsafed, should still *love darkness rather than light*, and abuse all the obligations God has been pleased to lay upon us, to promote his glory, and our own interest and happiness, what condemnation can we think will be heavy enough for us, who wilfully refuse to be saved?

We have indeed great reasons to hope, that at that great day of accounts, the all-merciful God will wink at the ignorance of those poor creatures who never enjoyed that light, and those advantages and opportunities which we have had: and will pass a more favourable sentence upon them.

But

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But the case is far otherwise with us. He hath shewed us most clearly in his holy word, what is good, and what he does require of us. He now expects and commands all men every where to repent, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, because *he has appointed a day*, and made a most public declaration of it, *in which he will judge the world in righteousness*, Acts xvii. 31. If we therefore, after all the light and knowledge which we have had, in such an abundant and gracious manner, shall still be so wicked as to reject his counsels, and despise his instructions, and set at nought all his precious promises; what shall we be able to say for ourselves? or who shall be able to plead for such obstinate and perverse wretches as we have been? May it not be expected, that what our Saviour said of the impenitent and unbelieving *Jews*, shall be verified upon impenitent christians, that *it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, for Sodom and Gomorrha, in the day of Judgment, than for you*, Luke x. 12, 14. when the advantages we have received will inflame our account, and heighten our condemnation:

demnation: and the very means of our salvation, will be the saddest aggravation of our ruin?

The Conclusion.

HAVING thus gone through the several parts which I proposed to consider, in explaining this great article of a future Judgment, I come now to a conclusion of the whole. And this shall be by way of advice to all of us, to take the best care we possibly can to be prepared for it. In order to this, let us,

FIRST, Seriously consider with ourselves, that we are all equally concerned in it. All men, of what rank and condition soever they are, are, without any difference or exception, liable to the Judgment of GOD. Whoever thou art, how great, or rich, or powerful soever, though never so mighty and considerable among men, thou shalt not escape the Judgment of GOD, but thou *must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ*, and give an account of all thy actions. Nothing that thou hast said,
or

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or thought, or done, has escaped his knowledge; he knows it altogether, and has kept a book of remembrance of it, though never so secretly done by thee, which shall be produced before all that great assembly of angels and saints at the last day, to thy everlasting honour, or to thy eternal shame and confusion; and thou shalt then be rewarded or punished for it, as thou shalt be found at that great inquest to have deserved.

It is very much to be feared, that the greatest part of mankind, though they do profess to believe a Judgment to come, do hardly ever think so seriously as they ought to do, that they themselves shall one day be concerned in it. For if they did, they could not so easily be guilty of such stupidity and carelessness, such malice and uncharitableness, such immorality and profaneness, such want of all true religion and godliness, as is too frequently to be seen in their behaviour and practice, almost every day of their lives, and never in the least prepare themselves for this solemn reckoning. And what then will they be able to say for themselves, when they shall
see

see themselves in good earnest ready to be called to a strict account for what they have done in their whole lives? O consider this, all ye that now forget God, and think what you must come to another day; and therefore, for God's sake, and for your own soul's sake, be wise in time, and think seriously of it, before it is too late, how you shall best be prepared for it.

SECONDLY, Let us all resolve, without delay, to put ourselves into that state and condition, as near as we can, in which we may not be afraid that Judgment should find us. And that will certainly best be done, by often reviewing our lives, and calling ourselves to a strict account of our actions; and then judging ourselves for whatever we find amiss in them, that we may not be judged and condemned by the Lord. It is the want of doing this, that makes men continually in a state of impenitence all their lives long. For if men would but frequently examine themselves by the rule of God's laws, as they ought to do, this would bring them to a true sense of the errors and miscarriages of their lives, and shew them how ungrateful they have

have been to that good and gracious God, who has so long preserved them from that ruin which they have justly deserved; and that again would prompt them to a serious repentance of them; and shew them the necessity of a sincere amendment of their lives for the future; and make them ashamed to fall into the same errors and transgressions again, for which they have so lately and so severely censured and condemned themselves.

THIRDLY, Let us be always employing ourselves in some good action or other, either of religion and piety towards God, or of righteousness and charity towards men; as instructing them in their duty, of reclaiming them from their vicious courses; or in demeaning ourselves with sobriety and diligence, and a good conscience, in the works of our lawful callings. For these God is pleased graciously to accept of, as instances of our fear and reverence for him, and accounts them as done for his service, when we behave ourselves in an honest and industrious way, and with true contentment of mind in that station of life, which he in his good providence has thought fit

to

to place us. By such actions as these, we shall be in a constant readiness and preparation for the coming of our Lord. And oh! what a happiness and comfort will it be to us, to be found by him thus employed! *Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing, St Matt. xxiv. 46.*

BUT more particularly, let us be careful to exercise ourselves in works of mercy and charity, according to that ability which God has given us, and the opportunities which his good providence shall put into our hands. Always remembering, that our blessed Saviour has represented this, as a special matter of inquiry at the Judgment of the great day, how we have acquitted ourselves in duties of this kind; and has assured us, that nothing does more immediately qualify us for the mercy of God, when we shall come to stand before his judgment-seat, than to have shewn mercy to our poor brethren, which he will account as done to himself, *St Matt. xxv. 40.* But on the contrary, has threatned the severest punishment to those that did it not. And so likewise *St James* tells us,
That

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That he shall have Judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy, chap. ii. 13.

FOURTHLY, Let us often represent to our minds the Judgment of the great day, which will certainly come, tho' we know not the time of it. For God, who is the great lover of souls and desirous to save us any ways, by hope and by fear, by his mercies, and by his corrections, by our knowledge and by our ignorance, hath purposely concealed from us the time of his coming to Judgment, to the end we may be always prepared for it. Even this very night we may be awakened by the sound of that mighty trumpet, which shall pierce the ears of all the world, and summon the living and the dead to Judgment. And if any thing in the world will prevail with men to be watchful and diligent in preparing for it, certainly this will, to consider, that the Judgment of God continually hangs over them, and may, for ought they know, be now standing at the door, ready to rush in upon them. For so our Lord himself has foretold, that *as a snare it shall come upon all them that dwell on the face of the earth*, St Luke xxi. 35.
when

when they are not aware of it. As the first destruction by the deluge came suddenly upon the old world, and surprised all the inhabitants of it unawares, when they had not the least thought of any such thing happening to them; for *they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, till the flood came and took them all away; and so shall the coming of the Son of man be,* St Matthew xxiv. 38, 39. *The day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night,* 1 Theff. v. 2. When all things are wrapt up in silence, in sleep, and in security, then shall the fatal day rush in unawares upon all men, and overwhelm them with swift and irresistible destruction, unless they be prepared for it.

THINK now therefore, O ye careless ones, what will be your thoughts at that day, and upon the amazing circumstances that will attend it; ‘ All nature dissolving
‘ in agonies, the world flaming, the sea
‘ roaring, the earth in convulsions, the
‘ rocks and mountains falling in pieces,
‘ the dreadful flashes of lightning, the
‘ loud volleys of thunder, the shrieks and
‘ cries of distressed and despairing sinners,
‘ attacking you from every quarter, and

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‘ a guilty conscience stabbing and terrify-
 ‘ ing you from within; tell me, if you
 ‘ can, what your thoughts would be, if
 ‘ you were surpris’d with the thousand
 ‘ terrors of that dreadful day. Ah stupid
 ‘ wretch! (would not such a one then say)
 ‘ I am lost and undone for ever! was I
 ‘ not often told of this day? had I not
 ‘ proofs enough given me, that it certain-
 ‘ ly would come, and yet I would not
 ‘ think of it, would not prepare for it?
 ‘ Ah! now I see those miseries which I
 ‘ cannot escape; I see those glories that I
 ‘ can never share in, and (wo is me for
 ‘ ever) both greater than ever I was told:
 ‘ How foolishly, how madly have I acted,
 ‘ in giving myself up to the profits and
 ‘ pleasures of the world! where are now
 ‘ my lands and possessions? where are my
 ‘ friends and flatterers? what now remains
 ‘ of all my pride and confidence, of all my
 ‘ shameful lusts and sinful pleasures? Oh!
 ‘ the bitter end of my incorrigible folly!
 ‘ what would I now give for one of the
 ‘ days of the Son of man? What would
 ‘ I now part with (if there were any thing
 ‘ for me to part with) for an interest in
 ‘ Christ? But that cannot now be: it is

‘ too

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‘ too late for me now to think of making
‘ my peace with G O D.’

AND indeed, if there were any time for it, the horror and amazement that sinners will then be in, would hinder them from doing any thing. For thus the scriptures represent the fearful case of sinners surprised with the last Judgment, as not knowing what to do with themselves, nor whither to fly for safety; as ready to betake themselves any whither for shelter and refuge; as *calling upon the mountains and rocks to fall upon them, and hide them from the face of him that sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the lamb*, Rev. vi. 16. Hereby signifying to us, that sinners shall be in such a consternation at that day, and in so deep a despair of the mercy of God towards them; that instead of addressing themselves to him, they shall turn their supplications to the mountains and rocks, as being more exorable than he is.

O H O W earnest therefore should every one of us now be, in this our day, to prevent such a dismal surprise happening to us! which can be done by nothing more certainly than by a careful preparation for it; by a hearty and sincere repentance for

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all our sins past, and a holy and good life consequent upon it. These alone will clear our consciences of all dreadful fears, both at the hour of death, and at the day of Judgment. And this course will render the great Judge of the world propitious to us, and then nothing else can hurt us. For all will be joy and peace after that, thro' the merits of our dear Saviour. The day of Judgment will then be the happiest day we have seen ever since we had our being: and will be the beginning of such a felicity, as we are not able now to conceive, and much less to express; but all holy souls shall experience and feel it to their unspeakable comfort, in the fruition of everlasting joy and glory in heaven, with GOD, and angels, and all the holy saints, for ever and ever.

LET us in the last place remember, that another excellent means to fit and prepare us for the last Judgment, is by continual and fervent prayer to apply ourselves to the GOD of all grace, *1 Pet. v. 10.* for his help to make us watchful over ourselves, and all the actions of our lives; to enable us to a patient continuance in well-doing, to keep us from every evil work, and preserve

serve us to his heavenly kingdom. A hearty and devout prayer, is one of the most effectual means for the obtaining any grace and virtue we stand in need of, for the accomplishing our christian warfare in the most acceptable manner. Whenever we heartily beg of GOD to assist us by his grace in doing any thing that is good, we at the same time put ourselves in mind of our own duty, which is to put forth our own endeavours for the obtaining what we pray for. And when GOD observes this good disposition in us, he is greatly pleased with it, and will then more readily grant us his divine blessing and assistance to succeed our endeavours, and to secure them from miscarriage. And without the aid of GOD's grace, and his blessing on our endeavours, they will all prove ineffectual, and signify nothing; we shall not be able so much as to watch one hour. If we should rely only upon our own strength, the fickleness and uncertainty of our own resolutions would soon deceive us; and therefore well might the Psalmist say, that *if God be not with us, the watchman watcheth but in vain*, Psalm cxxvii. 2. Let us therefore

therefore but implore his assistance, and put our trust in him with all our hearts, to enable us to order our lives so as to be in a due preparation for Judgment, and let our own hearty endeavours go along with our prayers; and we may then be assured of all the assistance the divine goodness, and his never-failing providence can give us, in order to the perfecting of it: and we shall then not fail of success, but *be prepared to meet our Lord at his coming*, 1 Theff. iv. 17.

*A Prayer for mercy in the day of
Judgment.*

O Blessed Jesus, who didst once come in great humility, to offer thyself to thy offended Father a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of all mankind; and shalt once again, at the end of the world, come in power and great glory to be the Judge of quick and dead; do thou vouchsafe to hear the humble suit of a poor wretched sinner that most earnestly begs of thee, to shew him mercy at that day. I know, that if
thou

thou shouldst then be extreme to mark what I have done amiss, I shall not be able to lift up my face before thee, but must stand trembling and confounded before thy righteous presence, and all that solemn assembly of angels and men, expecting the dreadful sentence of condemnation from thee, because my innumerable heinous transgressions have deserved it. But, O dear Saviour, who wert thyself cloathed with flesh and blood, and therefore art sensible of the follies, temptations, and infirmities of human nature; pity my weaknesses, and pardon my infirmities. And as it has been thy property always to have mercy, I most humbly beseech thee, let me not then want it, when I shall stand most in need of it; but save me by thy mercy, who must otherwise be condemned by thy justice: that so hearing that joyful sentence from thee, my most gracious and compassionate Judge, Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord; I may with angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven, adore, and sing thy praises, O blessed Jesus, to all eternity. *Amen.*

Another.

Another.

O Lord, who hast declared that thou wilt hereafter call every one of us to a strict account for our thoughts, our words, and our actions; and according as we shall have done well or ill, wilt reward us with everlasting happiness, or punish us with everlasting misery; do thou, by the influence of thy Holy Spirit, teach me to be ever mindful of my great accounts; and so to order my whole conversation in this world, than when the last trumpet shall sound, to awaken me out of my grave, and to summon me before thy Judgment-seat, I may arise with joy, and not with grief, and be placed by thy angels on thy right hand, ready to be numbered among those blessed souls, that shall receive that joyful welcome from thee, their gracious Judge and Saviour, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Grant this my most important request, I most humbly beseech thee, O blessed Lord and Saviour. *Amen, Amen.*



DISCOURSE
UPON
HEAVEN.



HAVING finished what I thought fit to say on Death and Judgment, in order to engage men to a serious preparation for them; I come now to consider the third of the Four last Things, as they are usually stiled, viz. Heaven.

IN speaking to which, I shall do these several things following;

First, I shall shew the locality of it; that Heaven is a certain, real, determinate, and fixt place.

Q

Secondly,

Secondly, I shall endeavour to explain, in some measure, wherein the happiness of it does consist.

Thirdly, I shall say something of the qualification for it, or what is to be done by us in order to the attaining of it.

Fourthly, I shall shew that there are different degrees of glory and happiness in Heaven.

Fifthly, What the consideration of them does require from us.

Of the locality of Heaven.

BY Heaven, we understand not a state or manner of being only, but a certain, real, determinate, and fixt place in the upper regions of the world, appointed by GOD, to be the receptacle of all holy and blessed souls, after that they shall have been tried, and given an account of themselves, before the judge of the world, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and been found

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found worthy by him to be eternally happy; all such shall then accordingly be invited by him, to take possession of it, in those most gracious words, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world,* Matt. xxv. 34.

Now that there is such a certain, real, determinate, and fixt place, no sober christian can well doubt, who reads those words of our Lord, *St John xiv. 2, 3. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.* But yet, for the greater confirmation of it, the same thing is intimated to us very plainly in some other places of the holy scripture. *Heb. ix. 12. By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.* This was the place of which our Saviour spake to his disciples, *What if you shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?* that is, to Heaven, from whence he came: and in several other places to the same purpose.

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BESIDES,

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BESIDES, it is all along in scripture described as a place inhabited by several intelligent beings. It is sometimes therein called by the name of paradise, 2 Cor. xii. 4. in allusion to the garden of *Eden* (which was a real place) because of its being a most pleasant and delightful place. And in the *Revelations*, chap. ii. 7. it is called *the paradise of God*, still further to denote the inconceivable, and unutterable pleasure and delight of it. It being usual among the *Hebrews*, to express the greater excellency of any thing, by adding those words of GOD to it, as *the river of GOD*, *the city of GOD*, and the like. It is the place, which GOD the Father honours with his more immediate presence, who is therefore often called *the King of Heaven*; and in the Lord's prayer, *Our Father, which art in Heaven*. It is the place also, where the Son of GOD has his residence, *at the right hand of his Father*, from whence he is stiled *the Lord of Heaven*, 1 Cor. xv. 47. Where also GOD the Holy Ghost, the third Person in the blessed Trinity inhabits, with the Father and the Son; and he is therefore said *to be sent down from Heaven*, when he came

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came down upon the apostles at the day of Pentecost, 1 *Pet.* i. 12. And moreover, this place is *the court* of the great King, where all his glorious ministers, the angels, stand ready to obey his commands, who are therefore stiled, *the angels of Heaven*, Matt. xxiv. 36. And lastly, it is in scripture frequently put in opposition to Hell, which is doubtless a real and determinate place of misery. All which places do plainly shew the exceeding whimsicalness and folly of such enthusiasts, ' who tell us ' of a Heaven within, and that the notion ' of a local Heaven is too mercenary and ' carnal, and favours more of *Mahometism*, ' than of real truth.'

THIS excellent place is now indeed more plainly discovered to us, since the light of the gospel shined upon us; and with this great addition, that both soul and body shall be united together again at the resurrection, and therein enjoy unspeakable happiness for ever.

IT must be acknowledged indeed, that from the earliest times, some notion of the happiness of good souls, somewhere, after their departure from this life, seems to have

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been the persuasion of all such as had any notion of the soul's immortality. Which might probably be from hence; 'That
' God almighty, in his great mercy and
' goodness, to comfort the hearts, and
' support the spirits of good men, while
' they continue in this state of mortality,
' this valley of tears, and for their encouragement to be good and virtuous, did
' vouchsafe to infuse into mens minds, now
' and then, some glimmerings of better
' things to come, which should hereafter,
' in his due time, be brightned up upon
' them, when a more glorious scene should
' begin to be displayed upon the world.'

AND for this reason it is not improbable, that God was graciously pleased, in the first ages of the world, to allow *Enoch*, a person of consummate piety and virtue, the particular privilege of not seeing death, by translating him, soul and body together, into Heaven by angels; as he did *Elijah* afterwards, it is very likely, for the same reason.

NAY further, might not this notice be derived down by tradition from father to son by the first Patriarchs; and after the deluge,

deluge, from *Noah* to his sons, and so to their children after them? which tradition being by degrees, in a long course of time, greatly corrupted their poets (who were also their philosophers) built upon it a new notion of the *elysian fields*, for the abode of the souls of the righteous after death. To compleat the description of which, they employed the utmost stretch of their fancy, to fill them with all manner of delights, which could be thought of, for the soul's entertainment.

THESE were afterwards by some of their learned philosophers changed for places in the *etherial regions*, which the divine *Plato* called 'the islands of the blessed,' where they should enjoy all happiness, and be free from all evil. And the great *Cicero* fixes the soul in the *empyrean orb* after its separation from the body, where it shall want nothing that can contribute to its utmost joy and delight. But neither he, nor any of the rest of the philosophers of old, had any notion of the resurrection of the body, to be joined together again with the soul, and then to partake with it in happiness.

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As these were poor mean notions, invented or heightened by the vain imaginations of men, while *they sat in darkness and in the shadow of death*: so are all these imaginary places now vanished, and such weak notions and inventions totally discarded by christians, as they ought to be, since a more glorious light is risen upon them by the gospel, and they have a more sure word of promise than ever the world had before; whereby they have an infallible assurance given them by Christ and his inspired apostles, that God will bestow upon all holy and good men, after this world and all things in it are at an end, an habitation with himself, and his most blessed Son, and the Holy Ghost, and an innumerable company of angels, in the blessed regions above; such as are the purest regions of the world, and therefore called *the regions of light*; and such as the scripture calls *the highest heavens*, and St Paul expresseth by the *third heavens*, 2 Cor. xii. 2. where shall be joys and delights, infinitely above all those which this world can afford, and, which is the greatest and most valuable

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able addition to them that can be, they shall continue such without any decay, or end, for ever and ever. And this place, where-ever it is, we justly call Heaven.

BEFORE I proceed to consider the happiness which all those shall be partakers of who shall be admitted to dwell within that blessed place, I conceive it may not be improper (in order to raise in us more ardent desires of enjoying it) to take some notice of the outward beauty and magnificence of it, as it is thought to be described by St *John* in his Revelations, chap. xxi. under the notion of the new *Jerusalem*. There, ver. 18, 19, 21, 23. *The building of the wall of it is represented as being of jasper, and the city itself as pure gold, like unto glass, and the foundation of the walls as garnished with all manner of precious stones, and the streets of the city as pure gold, and as it were transparent glass. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*

WHICH expression, though allowed to be figurative only, and not literal, yet as they seem designed to convey our minds the

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the notion of a place, of such transcendent beauty and magnificence, as never was heard of or imagined before in this world, we may very well conclude it to be so, both from thence, and also because it is the place where the King of glory himself resides and keeps his court, and gives the greatest evidences of his presence, by communicating his glory with the utmost majesty to the perceptions of all his happy subjects: a place, which, beside all the natural beauties and pleasures of it, is adorned with the illustrious presence of the Son of God, who after all his sufferings, and all his combats with the kingdom of darkness, is there triumphantly set at the right hand of God the Father, in the fulness of power and glory, and made Governor and Lord both of angels and men; where an innumerable company of angels (every one of whom is far greater in dignity and glory, than the greatest monarchs of this world) do continually attend and wait upon God, to fulfil his commands; and where he intends most bountifully to reward all those pious and holy souls, who

faithfully

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faithfully served him in this world, with unspeakable glory and happiness, that shall never have an end.

AND so I proceed to the second thing which I proposed to do, *viz.* to endeavour to explain in some measure, wherein the happiness of Heaven does consist.

Wherein the happiness of Heaven does consist.

I SAID, in some measure, because we are as yet much in the dark about these matters. St *John* has told us, that though we are the sons of God, it does not yet appear what we shall be, 1 John iii. 2. To declare wherein the blessedness of the just shall exactly consist at the resurrection, exceeds our narrow apprehensions of things, while we are in this mortal and imperfect state. Our present faculties are not able to bear a full and clear representation of so great a glory, as good men shall be partaker of in the heavenly mansions.

WHEN

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WHEN our Saviour was transfigured upon the mount, and but a little image of Heaven was shewn to the disciples, they were strangely amazed, and *knew not what they said*, St Mark ix. 6. And St Paul tells when *he was taken up into the third Heaven*, the things which he saw and heard there, were not to be uttered. So that well might St John say, *It doth not yet appear what we shall be.*

WE must be content, while we are in this world, to know something of it in general only; for as we are at present, we do not understand a thousandth part of the particular circumstances, which will contribute to the bliss of good men in the future state. ‘Our souls must be raised to a greater perfection, and our understandings filled with a stronger and steadier light, before we can be fit to treat of such a subject, according to the real worth and dignity of it. We must first have been in Heaven, and possessed of that felicity and glory which is there to be enjoyed, before we can think or talk of it in such a manner, and such terms as it truly deserves.’

AND

AND then again, beside all this, the blessedness of that state does entirely depend upon the good pleasure of GOD, whose free gift it is, and he has not thought fit to reveal to us all the particular ingredients whereof it consists; though he has been pleased, for our support and encouragement in this life, to discover to us so much of them, as fully to convince us, that it will be exceedingly happy, beyond all that we have ever seen or experienced in this world.

IT will concern us therefore, whenever we think or speak of that happy state, to form our thoughts and our notions of it, according to those measures that God hath given us in the holy scriptures; and not rashly to conceive any thing of it, but what we have warrant for either directly, or by consequence, from the discoveries which are therein made.

BUT even as to what is said in the scriptures, give me leave to mention one caution to be observed, before I proceed.

‘ There are in the scriptures several metaphors and parables made use of, to figure out to us the joys of the blessed; as eat-
‘ ing

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' ing and drinking at Christ's table, sumptuous banquets, marriage feasts, fertile pastures, beautiful dwellings, magnificent cities, whose sun never sets; thrones, and all the ensigns of honour peculiar to princes upon earth: all which passages are certainly not to be understood in their literal sense, because all such gratifications of sense, as they express, shall cease after this life is at an end, as well as the necessities that require them, and the appetites themselves that recommend them.'

' ALL that is intended by that great variety of figures made choice of for this purpose, being no more than this; to shew us, that all the satisfaction, which the most sensual man can possibly imagine or wish for in this world; as from the greatest plenty, the highest honour, the most exquisite beauty, and every rational and truly manly pleasure; shall be vastly exceeded in the happiness of the next world, where there is no sort of joy whereof we are capable in that state, but what will be conferred upon us in its utmost perfection.'

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I PROCEED therefore now in the description of the heavenly happiness, as we may learn it from the scriptures. There are these two things which may evidently be gathered from thence concerning it.

THE first is this, that we shall there be entirely freed from all those things, which are used to give us any disturbance or uneasiness in this world: such as are those infirmities and imperfections, those evils and miseries, those sins and temptations, to which we are liable, while we continue here; all which shall there be far removed from us, never to grieve or afflict us any more for ever: this may be called a negative happiness.

SECONDLY, We shall there enjoy all those solid and substantial blessings, which the infinitely good and gracious lover of souls has prepared for the entertainment and pleasure of all his faithful friends and servants to all eternity: wherein the positive happiness of Heaven does consist.

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Of the negative happiness of Heaven.

FIRST, We shall there be entirely freed from all those things which were used to give us any disturbance and uneasiness, while we continued in this mortal state.

THE very best and happiest persons, whom the sun ever shined upon in this world, have not been wholly exempted from the infirmities and imperfections, from the evils and miseries, from the sins and temptations, which are the attendants of our mortal nature; the wise and good providence of GOD, having so permitted or ordered it, for very excellent ends and purposes, which we shall be hereafter fully acquainted with, to his greater glory, and our own greater happiness; when we shall be arrived at that blessed place of rest and peace, from whence all sorrow, and grief, and tears shall be for ever banished away.

THESE, while men have continued in this world, have been very afflictive, grievous, and troublesome, even to good men themselves, to bear. They have filled their
lives

lives with many uneasy hours, and have been the causes of many real vexations, miseries, and sorrows to them. But when this life is once at an end, and they shall be thought worthy to be admitted into the happy regions above, then shall they rest from all their labours; and peace, and quietness, and tranquillity, shall be the constant entertainment and delight of their souls.

THEY shall then rest from sinning and offending against God, which is now one of the greatest troubles of every good man's life. 'For here, the best of men do offend in many things, and are forced to pass bitter reflections upon themselves for those offences. We are always engaged here with the three great enemies of our souls, the world, the flesh, and the devil, who are ever throwing in our way temptations and allurements to sin; and do continually give us great uneasiness and trouble in watching against their assaults, lest we should be surpris'd by them, and do any thing that may be displeasing to God, deprive us of his favour, and provoke him to punish us.'

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‘ BY these, good men (who, out of
 ‘ a sense of their duty and obligations to
 ‘ God, heartily intend to serve him, and
 ‘ make it the chief care and business of
 ‘ their lives to do so) do yet find, through
 ‘ the infirmity and corruption of their na-
 ‘ ture, that notwithstanding all their best
 ‘ resolutions and endeavours, they are still
 ‘ at some times too apt to be surpris’d in-
 ‘ to sin, and sometimes to be even wilfully
 ‘ guilty of it. The remembrance of which
 ‘ gives them great uneasiness in their minds
 ‘ afterwards, and fills them with doubts
 ‘ about their own sincerity, and with fears
 ‘ lest God should withdraw his grace from
 ‘ them, and that then they should never
 ‘ be able to arrive at that degree of virtue
 ‘ and holiness, which God requires of
 ‘ them, in order to fit them for eternal sal-
 ‘ vation; and these are the occasions of
 ‘ many sad heart-breaking sorrows to
 ‘ them.’

‘ BUT when through the infinite mer-
 ‘ cy of God, and the merits of their dear
 ‘ Saviour, they find all their sins to be
 ‘ pardoned, and themselves to be happily
 ‘ placed in the mansions of the blessed:
 ‘ When

‘ When their own perceptions shall convince them, to their unspeakable joy and comfort, that their warfare is safely over and that all their jealousies of their own condition are vain, and their fears removed, and that they may from thenceforth freely join with all the blessed company they meet there, in singing eternal praises to their G O D and Saviour, for making them happy with them for ever :
‘ Oh ! what tongue is able to express the joy, which their souls shall feel themselves possessed with, at that happy change !’
Then again, ‘ There are many other things, which do oftentimes give great occasions of sorrow and trouble, to all sorts of persons, which are not wholly to be prevented or avoided in this life, by the utmost care and prudence ; such as are our own and others misfortunes in the world.
‘ Thus to see and hear of the miseries, which our best and dearest friends, or our near relations, are oftentimes entangled in, and are yet beyond our power to relieve them from ; to behold the dismal spectacles that are every day presented to our eyes, of some poor crea-

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‘ tures ready to starve for want of bread,
 ‘ and of others languishing under great
 ‘ pains of body ; to see one near relation
 ‘ ruined by cross and sad accidents, and
 ‘ another taking such bad courses, as we
 ‘ have reason to fear will prove his utter
 ‘ ruin hereafter; these are such things as
 ‘ any one, who has any bowels of huma-
 ‘ nity, cannot but be grievously afflicted at.’

‘ THEN again the sicknesses and dis-
 ‘ eases of ourselves, our friends and rela-
 ‘ tions, and the loss of them by death;
 ‘ and the anxiety and solicitude which we
 ‘ are forced sometimes to submit to in the
 ‘ management of our worldly affairs; the
 ‘ crosses and losses, the troubles and incon-
 ‘ veniencies which we often meet with in
 ‘ relation to them; do all of them at some
 ‘ time or other prove the causes of great
 ‘ uneasinesses and vexations to us, and will
 ‘ assuredly do so, while we continue in this
 ‘ changeable and uncertain world, but are
 ‘ all immediately at an end when we leave
 ‘ it.’

‘ WHEN God shall have been pleased to
 ‘ remove us from this mortal state, to that
 ‘ immortal one which is above with him in
 ‘ Heaven,

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Heaven, there we shall enjoy a perfect rest; free from all manner of discontents, from every thing that can render our condition in the least troublesome to us. All our past sufferings and uneasinesses will then be no further remembered by us, than only as the remembrance of them will contribute to the increase of our joys and delight, in our being delivered from them. No affliction or sorrow upon any account, shall ever be experienced in those blessed regions above. Thus *St John* describes the felicity of the future state, *Rev. xxi. 4.* *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.* Every thing that causeth grief shall be expelled from thence for ever.

Oh! how unspeakably happy then shall all those holy and righteous souls be, that shall find admission there! *Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads, they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away,* *Isai. xxxv. 10.*

‘AND is not then such a state of life
‘as this infinitely desirable? Can all the
‘little

‘ little, pitiful, mean, transient delights and
 ‘ vain glories of this world, which are al-
 ‘ ways changing, and never certain, stand
 ‘ in any competition with this, when they
 ‘ come to be compared with it? Oh!
 ‘ how should we then long to be partakers
 ‘ of it! how should we despise all the pains
 ‘ and labours we can possibly be at for the
 ‘ acquisition of it, when we consider (as
 ‘ we all ought to do daily) that *the suffer-*
 ‘ *ings of this present time, are not worthy to*
 ‘ *be compared with the glory which shall be*
 ‘ *revealed in us? Rom. viii. 18.’*

AND yet all this is but the least part of
 the happiness of the future state, only the
 negative part of it. There are besides,
 many solid, and substantial, and positive
 blessings to be enjoyed there, far greater
 than any that ever were known in this
 world, which the infinitely good and gra-
 cious lover of souls has prepared, and ap-
 pointed for the entertainment and pleasure
 of all his faithful servants there to all eter-
 nity.

Of the positive happiness of Heaven.

I Come now to consider, in the second place, wherein this does consist.

AND the first of the positive blessings which I shall take notice of, is this. Good men shall there find a vast improvement in their persons: both their souls and bodies shall then be advanced to the highest perfection they are capable of.

As our souls now are, they are not capable of perceiving the perfect happiness of that blessed and immortal state, which will chiefly consist in the vision of God; that is, in the perfect knowledge, and perpetual enjoyment of him. The imperfection of our present state, and the weakness of our faculties, cannot bear the sight of so glorious and resplendent an object, as the divine nature and perfections are. We cannot (now) see God and live. But St *John* has told us, *That we shall see him as he is*, 1 John iii. 2. And our Saviour has plainly revealed to us christians, that the blessedness of the saints shall consist in the vision of God.

Matt.

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Matt. v. 8. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

' BUT then we are not to imagine, that
 ' we shall see him with our bodily eyes;
 ' for being a pure spirit, he cannot be the
 ' object of our corporeal sense. And be-
 ' sides, so transcendent and glorious a sight,
 ' would quite overwhelm and overcome
 ' our faculties; as the light of the sun, if
 ' we look stedfastly and directly upon it,
 ' will dazzle and blind the strongest eye:
 ' so the sight of so glorious a being as God
 ' is, of so much excellency, and happi-
 ' ness, and perfection, would fill us with
 ' wonder too great for our limited nature
 ' to bear. But we shall have such a sight
 ' of him, as a pure spirit is capable of.
 ' We shall see him with the eyes of our
 ' minds and understandings. For in such
 ' a spiritual and intellectual sense, must
 ' sight of necessity be taken, when we
 ' speak of seeing God. The meaning of
 ' which therefore is, that when we come
 ' to Heaven, our understandings shall be
 ' raised and cleared to such a degree of
 ' strength and perfection, that we shall
 ' know God after a more perfect manner
 ' than

‘than we are capable of knowing him in
‘this state of mortality.’

‘OUR minds shall then be raised to a
‘strength and activity, as much above
‘that of the most knowing persons in this
‘world, as the thoughts of the greatest
‘philosopher, and wisest man upon earth,
‘are above the thoughts of a child or a
‘fool. Our understandings shall then be
‘much better fitted for the knowledge of
‘God, and of the things that belong to
‘that state; than the mind of any man
‘whatsoever is framed to understand any
‘thing in this world.’

‘FOR by this means we shall then have
‘a more perfect, that is, a more immedi-
‘ate, clear, full and certain knowledge
‘of the divine nature and perfections, than
‘we can now have, or even bear in this
‘mortal state.’

‘NOT that we are to imagine, that
‘when we come to Heaven, our under-
‘standings shall be raised to such a pitch,
‘as to be able perfectly to comprehend
‘the infinite nature and perfections of
‘God: for a created understanding being
‘natu-

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' naturally limited and finite, it cannot be
 ' stretched to the comprehension of what
 ' is infinite. But our knowledge shall
 ' then be advanced and raised to such de-
 ' grees of perfection, as a finite and created
 ' understanding is capable of. And this
 ' perfect knowledge of GOD, together
 ' with the happy effects of it, viz. those
 ' affections which it will raise in us, and
 ' that blessed enjoyment of the chief good
 ' which we are not now able to express,
 ' and shall never be able fully to compre-
 ' hend, is that which is called the sight
 ' of GOD.'

' HERE in this world we know but in
 ' part, we understand but as children, we
 ' see but, as it were, thro' a glass dark-
 ' ly, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. All that we do now
 ' know of GOD, and of those other most
 ' glorious objects in Heaven, is but very
 ' little in comparison of what we shall
 ' know hereafter; and that little we do
 ' know, is but imperfectly, obscurely, and
 ' confusedly. But when from children in
 ' this world, we come to be men of the
 ' other world, then that which is in part
 ' shall be done away; and in that state we
 ' shall

‘ shall see face to face, and know even as
‘ we are known: that is, we shall know
‘ more fully and evidently. We shall
‘ know G O D, and all those infinite other
‘ objects, which we shall desire to contem-
‘ plate as we know those that we look
‘ upon and converse with, as we ourselves
‘ are known to others, not by our picture
‘ only, but by being personally seen by
‘ them, and acquainted with them.’

‘ A N D as our understandings will be
‘ thus made perfect in knowledge, so will
‘ our wills also be made perfect in love.
‘ This being a natural consequence of that.
‘ For our minds having such a perception
‘ of G O D’s infinite loveliness and perfec-
‘ tions (as they will have in the heavenly
‘ state) cannot but represent him to us,
‘ as the greatest good, and the most ami-
‘ able object that can possibly be. For it
‘ is impossible, but that when we come
‘ perfectly to know him, we must take
‘ infinite pleasure in him, in beholding his
‘ glory, in praising and admiring his good-
‘ ness, in doing his will with all imagina-
‘ ble readiness and chearfulness, as the an-

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gels themselves now do. We cannot avoid cleaving to him with our whole hearts, and shall then find the greatest satisfaction that is possible, in so doing. We shall see such an infinite inexhaustible treasure of good in G O D, that we shall love, and admire, and delight in him, incomparably more than in any other good whatsoever. Nay, we shall love so long, and so intensely, till our souls be quite transformed into the nature of our beloved; till we become as like God, as it is possible for creatures to be. His will will be our will; his perfections will be our perfections; and we shall in a manner be one with him: and this is the perfection of love.

As our souls must be raised to a higher perfection, before they can be capable of perceiving the perfect happiness of that blessed state which is above; so must our bodies likewise be made more perfect than now they are, for the same end. Our bodies are here in a perpetual flux and change, continually tending to corruption and dissolution. But when they shall be raised again at the last day, they shall

‘ shall be so tempered and refined, as to
‘ be free from all destructive qualities,
‘ for they shall be raised incorruptible, so as
‘ not to be liable any more to decay and
‘ death. The body shall indeed still con-
‘ tinue material; but it shall then be so
‘ pure and refined, that it shall partake of
‘ the immortality of the soul, to which it
‘ is united, and be of equal duration with
‘ it.’ So the apostle tells us, 1 Cor. xv.
52, 53. *The dead shall be raised incorrupti-
ble; for this corruption must put on incorrup-
tion, and this mortal must put on immortality.*
For nothing but a fixt, and immutable,
and immortal nature, which can never de-
cay, can be happy for ever; and therefore
there is a necessity for this, in order to our
perfect happiness.

BUT as our bodies are now constituted,
they are utterly incapable of the happiness
of the next life. Hence says the apostle,
*Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of
God,* 1 Cor. xv. 50. that is, our mortal
nature cannot, which consists of such gross
materials as flesh and blood are; for the
maintenance and support of which, there

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is continual need of recruits and fresh supplies of nourishment, by meat and drink.

‘ WHEREAS our bodies, which shall be
‘ admitted to dwell there, shall undergo so
‘ great an alteration, that they shall from
‘ thenceforth have no wants or infirmities,
‘ no importunity of appetite, no hunger or
‘ thirst, no weariness for want of sleep, no
‘ pain or sorrow, no feebleness or decay,
‘ no sickness or old age, no dying any
‘ more; but they shall be of such lasting
‘ and durable matter, as not only time,
‘ but even eternity itself, shall make no
‘ impression upon them, or cause the least
‘ decay in them; for they shall be incor-
‘ ruptible, and by that means immortal,
‘ and so fitted to inherit the everlasting
‘ kingdom of God.’ And what a mighty
accession will all this be to our happiness?

Now if it be enquired, by what means the bodies of the saints in heaven shall undergo such a mighty change, and be fashioned after another manner, and be endowed with quite other qualities than they had before, the apostle *St Paul* has told us in his epistle to the *Philippians*, chap. iii. 21.
Our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ shall change

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our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself. And this is a great change indeed, whether we consider what our bodies now are, vile and corruptible, or the pattern according to which they shall be changed. They shall be fashioned like to the glorious body of our blessed Saviour; that body wherein he now sits in the highest heavens, at the right hand of the throne of God. ‘The omnipotency of the Son will display its whole force in bringing about this change. And what cannot that almighty power do, which is able to conquer and subdue all things?’

AND can we then desire a greater glory for our bodies than this, with which God thought fit to reward his own Son after all his obedience and sufferings? A glory, which the angels themselves shall never partake of; for they shall never be cloathed with such bodies as our Saviour now hath, wherein he sits at the right hand of God; yet such bodies as these, the apostle assures us, our souls shall be cloathed with at the resurrection; 'bodies as bright and glori-

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‘ous as the light; bodies so refined, that
‘they shall be as pure as the regions are,
‘wherein they are to inhabit; bodies so
‘light and active, that our souls may move
‘them whither and how we please, nor
‘will they be the least clog or encum-
‘brance to us; and to sum up all, for we
‘can go no further, even bodies so glori-
‘ous, that they shall be like unto that of
‘the Son of GOD himself!’

‘AND oh! what pleasure must this
‘needs raise in our souls, when we set our-
‘selves seriously to consider of these things?
‘to think what exalted degrees of perfec-
‘tion and happiness both our souls and
‘bodies are designed one day to be ad-
‘vanced to, in yonder regions above, be-
‘yond what they are partakers of here!
‘Oh! how should they fill us with eager
‘wishes and longings after so great a bliss!
‘and especially make us beg of GOD con-
‘tinually, that he would, by the daily
‘workings of his Holy Spirit upon our
‘hearts, dispose us so to order our conver-
‘sation here, that we may be prepared to
‘partake with all his faithful servants in
‘all

‘ all those blessings, which he has designed
‘ for them hereafter!’

Secondly, Another positive blessing, which will greatly add to the happiness of Heaven, will be the excellent company, that we shall there meet and converse with. The apostle to the *Hebrews*, chap. xii. 22, 23, 24. has given us a catalogue of the blessed company, which inhabit the city of God, the heavenly *Jerusalem*; and tells us, that ‘ when we come to mount *Sion*, the
‘ *city of the living God*, we shall there be
‘ adjoined to an innumerable company of an-
‘ gels, to the general assembly and church of
‘ the first-born, to the spirits of just men
‘ made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of
‘ the new covenant.’

LET us stay and exercise our thoughts awhile on the delightful contemplation of each of those particulars. ‘ We shall there
‘ be admitted to the presence of the blessed
‘ Jesus, and enter into the joy of our Lord,
‘ our most gracious redeemer, the best
‘ friend our souls ever had. And oh!
‘ how will our hearts spring with joy, and
‘ burn with love, and our mouths over-
‘ flow with praises and thanksgivings to
‘ him,

' him, when that blessed person shall not
 ' only permit us to see his glory, but also
 ' make us partakers of it! When we shall
 ' hear him recite to us the wondrous ad-
 ' ventures of his love, through how many
 ' woful stages he passed, to rescue us from
 ' misery, and make us happy! When we
 ' shall be thoroughly acquainted by himself,
 ' with the happy change of his woful con-
 ' dition, and shall see him that was once
 ' so cruelly treated upon earth for our
 ' sakes, raised now to be the head and
 ' prince of the heavenly hierarchy!'

' THERE we shall know, and be known,
 ' love, and be beloved, by the gracious
 ' sons of light, the holy angels of GOD;
 ' who in the days of our pilgrimage here,
 ' were always ready and chearful to exe-
 ' cute the commands of their and our great
 ' Lord and Master, whenever he was pleas-
 ' ed to signify his will to them, for our pro-
 ' tection and preservation from the many
 ' evils we were here encompassed with.
 ' They will kindly recite to us how many
 ' good offices they did for us, which we
 ' never knew of; how they often reminded

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‘ us of our follies and offences against God,
‘ when we were forgetful of them; and
‘ both encouraged us to, and joined with
‘ us in, our prayers to render them more
‘ acceptable and effectual at the throne of
‘ grace; and brought down commissions
‘ from the court of Heaven, for their as-
‘ sisting of us in the fulfilling of them;
‘ and when they had notice of our true re-
‘ pentance, and conversion from our evil
‘ ways, did as sincerely rejoice at it in
‘ Heaven, and did praise God and our
‘ Saviour for it, as if they themselves were
‘ concerned in it, and were to receive some
‘ great good from it: and will then much
‘ more rejoice with us, when they behold
‘ us safely escaped from all the dangers we
‘ were in in this world, and now admitted
‘ to be happy partakers of their glory, and
‘ of their conversation.

‘ THERE we shall, with joyful con-
‘ gratulations, be conducted by angels in-
‘ to the company of patriarchs, and pro-
‘ phets, and apostles, and martyrs, and
‘ introduced into an intimate acquaintance
‘ with them, and all *the spirits of just men,*
‘ made

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‘ made perfect, from the foundation of the
 ‘ world; that is, freed from all those pas-
 ‘ sions and infirmities, which do now ren-
 ‘ der the conversation, even of the best of
 ‘ men, sometimes troublesome to one ano-
 ‘ ther. There we shall converse with, ad-
 ‘ mire, and love those once burning and
 ‘ shining lights in the world; those great
 ‘ and generous souls, who by their excel-
 ‘ lent examples and noble deeds in their
 ‘ several generations, did promote the glo-
 ‘ ry of G O D and their Saviour in the
 ‘ world, and have embalmed their own
 ‘ names and memories thereby amongst all
 ‘ good men.’

‘ THERE we shall meet with many of
 ‘ our righteous acquaintance and friends,
 ‘ and perhaps with many of our enemies,
 ‘ to whom we shall then be perfectly re-
 ‘ conciled. There we shall again meet,
 ‘ and behold with unspeakable joy our
 ‘ husbands, our wives, our children, our
 ‘ brethren, our sisters, our relations that
 ‘ died in the fear of God, for whom we
 ‘ shed many a tear, and whose loss was so
 ‘ grievous to us. All those good persons
 ‘ whom we loved, and whose company

‘ was

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‘ was ever dear to us, while they lived,
‘ shall then again be restored to us, or ra-
‘ ther we to them; and so restored, as ne-
‘ ver to be separated any more from us;
‘ but we shall dwell together in perfect
‘ peace and joy, to enjoy one another to
‘ all eternity, without fear, without care,
‘ without envy and jealousy, or any other
‘ perturbation.’

‘ FOR Heaven is a state of perfect love
‘ and friendship; there will be nothing
‘ but kindness and good-nature, and all
‘ the prudent arts of endearment, and wise
‘ ways of rendering conversation mutually
‘ pleasant to one another. And now, oh!
‘ how transporting a consideration must
‘ this needs be to all those, that have any
‘ sense of the pleasure that arises from
‘ friendship, and agreeable conversation!’

‘ FOR what greater happiness can be
‘ imagined, than to converse freely, with-
‘ out any thing of jealousy and design up-
‘ on one of another, with persons endowed
‘ with large and comprehensive understand-
‘ ings, as well as perfect good-nature, and
‘ most generous charity, as all that most
‘ excellent company will be? For there
‘ will

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‘ will be none of those vices and passions,
‘ of covetousness and ambition, of envy
‘ and hatred, of wrath and peevishness,
‘ which do now so much spoil the pleasure,
‘ and disturb the quiet of mankind.’

‘ Who can ever be weary of such com-
‘ pany? or rather, who that believes these
‘ things, will not be so weary and unsatisf-
‘ fied with the short imperfect enjoyment
‘ we have of one another in this world,
‘ that he will not ardently long to be admit-
‘ ted into that happy society above, where
‘ when he is once entred, there shall never
‘ be any more parting, and so never any
‘ end, nor any abatement of that pleasure,
‘ which they shall mutually afford to each
‘ other; but it will rather be more and
‘ more encreasing to eternity, as they shall
‘ become more and more acquainted, and
‘ shall more and more love and be beloved
‘ by each other.’

‘ AND here I cannot but take notice
‘ how the great *Cicero* (though a heathen)
‘ was so affected with the thoughts of these
‘ things (which yet he had no stronger
‘ grounds for the belief of, than what na-
‘ tural reason suggested to him) that he
‘ cries

* cries out, in the person of *Cato*, to this
“ purpose (the words are wonderful to be
“ spoken by a heathen)” “ Oh! how I
“ long (saith he) to see and be present
“ with those friends of mine departed,
“ whom I have so much loved and ho-
“ noured! nor is it them only that I have
“ known, that I desire to go to, but all
“ those brave men I have heard of, and
“ read of, and writ of. If I were once a
“ going thither, none should draw me
“ back. If God should offer me to re-
“ store me to my youth, and to begin the
“ world again, I would resolutely refuse
“ it; for what advantage is there in this
“ life? or rather, what pain and trouble
“ is there not? Oh happy day! when I
“ shall depart from this sink of the world,
“ from this unquiet, tumultuous com-
“ pany, and go to dwell with the assem-
“ bly and congregation of divine souls.”
Thus far *Cicero*.

Thirdly, As the pleasure which shall arise
from the enjoyment of so much good com-
pany, in the heavenly mansions, will cer-
tainly be exceeding great, to all those who
shall

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shall be so happy as to be admitted to it; so still further, another great addition to it, will be the employments in which they shall spend their time. What the particulars will be, we cannot pretend to give an account of, since God has no where been pleased to reveal them to us; but this we may be sure of, that ‘ all the powers both
‘ of their souls and bodies, will be em-
‘ ployed to the best and most proper ends,
‘ and in the most excellent manner they
‘ are capable of.’

For it is not a dull and unactive life which they shall lead there, as if they had nothing else to do, but to be perpetually gazing upon God, which the schoolmen call the beatific vision, and barely contemplate the divine perfections. This will, no doubt, be one considerable part of the happiness of the blessed, ‘ to live in the
‘ reviving presence of God, and to be
‘ continually attending upon him, whose
‘ favour is life, and whose glory is much
‘ more above that of any of the Princes of
‘ this world, than the greatest of them is
‘ above the poorest worm. The Queen of
‘ *Sheba*

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‘*Sheba* thought *Solomon*’s servants happy,
‘in having the opportunity of standing
‘continually before him, to hear his wis-
‘dom: but in the other world, it shall be
‘a happiness to *Solomon* himself, and to the
‘wisest and greatest persons that ever were
‘in this world, to stand before this great
‘King of heaven, to admire his wisdom,
‘and behold his glory.’

BUT this will not be all the happiness
that is to be enjoyed there. ‘There will
‘be besides in Heaven a new world of ob-
‘jects, to employ and entertain the bless-
‘ed saints, to their inexpressible satisfac-
‘tion. There will be discovered new
‘mines of truth, to exercise their enlarged
‘understandings, which will at all times
‘afford matter of true joy and transport
‘to them.’

‘THERE the admirable power and con-
‘trivance of GOD in the creation of the
‘world, and his infinite wisdom in adjust-
‘ing all things to their proper capaci-
‘ties, shall most agreeably entertain their
‘thoughts, and raise in them the devoutest
‘admiration. There they shall please
T ‘them-

‘ themselves in searching out and explain-
‘ ing the stupendous mysteries of G O D’s
‘ holy word; and adore him for the eter-
‘ nal goodness and righteousness of his ho-
‘ ly laws; and the exact order and regu-
‘ larity of his government of the world.
‘ There they shall frequently exercise their
‘ tongues and ears, in telling and hearing
‘ the wonderful dispensations of G O D’s
‘ providence, in all parts of the world,
‘ from the beginning to the end thereof.
‘ There they shall exercise their memories,
‘ in recounting to themselves how ready he
‘ was upon all occasions to strengthen and
‘ to assist them with his grace, against the
‘ temptations of the world, the flesh, and
‘ the devil, and their own infirmities,
‘ whenever they devoutly asked it of him.’

‘ T H E R E they shall employ their
‘ thoughts in contemplating, how not on-
‘ ly the greater occurrences of their lives,
‘ but even the least circumstances of them,
‘ were graciously ordered and over-ruled
‘ by the steady hand of G O D’s providence;
‘ for their own good in particular, and the
‘ good of the world in general: how by
‘ his

his astonishing goodness, many favours
and blessings were heaped upon them, all
their lives long; and how many sore evils
and sad accidents they were delivered
from, while they were in this dangerous
and troublesome world: how he in his
great mercy often spared them from de-
struction, when they had deserved to be
punished for their sins and follies, and
gave them time and space for repentance,
and a heart to do it, that they might re-
form and amend their lives, and not
perish everlastingly.'

THERE they shall reflect upon GOD's
infinite love and goodness for his church
militant here on earth, in delivering it
out of all the straits and difficulties into
which it was brought, and then acknow-
ledge how good and necessary it was for
it, that every thing should be just as it
was.'

THERE they shall moreover employ
themselves in solemn acts of worship and
adoration to GOD, and very probably in
receiving orders from him, and readily
putting them in execution, as the angels

' of GOD do; and at the same time that
 ' they entertain their thoughts most de-
 ' lightfully, with contemplating their pre-
 ' sent happy state, they shall be able to
 ' look forwards also to those rivers of plea-
 ' sure that are before them, and will never
 ' cease to flow upon them from that inex-
 ' haustible spring of goodness.'

' In all these instances, and in innume-
 ' rable others, which it is impossible for
 ' us now to conceive, or have any notion
 ' of, the imployment will be exceedingly
 ' delightful, and will fill them with inex-
 ' pressible joy and satisfaction.

' BUT of all the other works which the
 ' happy inhabitants of those blessed regions
 ' do exercise themselves in, that of praise
 ' and thanksgiving, is in the scripture ta-
 ' ken notice of, as their peculiar office
 ' and constant employment in that state.
 ' There they cease not day and night say-
 ' ing, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty,*
 ' *which was, and is, and is to come,* Rev.
 ' iv. 8. *There they fall down, and cast their*
 ' *crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art*
 ' *worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and ho-*
 ' *nour, and power, for thou hast created all*
 ' *things,*

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‘ things, and for thy pleasure they are and
‘ were created, chap. iv. 10, 11. There
‘ they chant forth the praises of the lamb,
‘ saying, *Worthy is the lamb, who was slain,*
‘ *to receive power, and riches, and wisdom,*
‘ *and strength, and honour, and glory, and*
‘ *blessing; for he hath redeemed us to God by*
‘ *his blood, out of every kindred, and tongue,*
‘ *and people, and nation, and hath made us*
‘ *unto our God kings and priests,* Rev. v. 9,
‘ 10, 12. There they shall sing the song of
‘ *Moses, and the song of the lamb, saying,*
‘ *Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord*
‘ *God almighty, just and true are thy ways,*
‘ *thou King of saints. Who shall not fear*
‘ *thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name, for*
‘ *thou only art holy?* Rev. xv. 3, 4. And
‘ what pleasant and chearful lives must they
‘ needs lead, who are always thus em-
‘ ployed ?

IF in this dull state, where through the
infirmities of our nature, we cannot raise
up our souls to a due sense of God’s infi-
nite excellencies and perfections, and not
without some difficulty keep our thoughts
steadily employed in the contemplation of
them, it is yet so joyful and pleasant a
‘ thing,

thing, as holy *David* expresses it, to sing praises and thanksgivings to God the Father, and to our blessed Saviour, and to the Holy Spirit, for all those numberless invaluable blessings we have received, and do daily receive from them; oh! how delightful will it be to join with all the innumerable company of angels and archangels, and the blessed spirits of just men made perfect, in knowledge and in love, in singing forth their praises, in the lofty strains and harmonious melody of cherubim and seraphin? This, this, shall be the employment of the blessed spirits above: and these are some of the ingredients of their happiness, which God has thought fit to acquaint us with in the holy scriptures.

AND if there were no other, as there may be ten thousand more, for any thing we can tell, yet these would be sufficient to raise in their souls a pleasure so great, that nothing could be added to it but this, that it should be eternal; as indeed this happiness of Heaven is declared to be, to make it still more compleat. ‘ I own indeed that eternity is but a circumstance,
‘ but

‘ but it is an amazing and astonishing one,
‘ of our future blessedness, that after ten
‘ thousand times more millions of years,
‘ than are single dust or small sands in
‘ the vast body of the whole earth, our
‘ happiness should still be as far from an
‘ end, as it was in the first moment of our
‘ entering upon it; and though as a cir-
‘ cumstance it does not indeed enter into
‘ the nature of the heavenly happiness, yet
‘ it is so material a one, that all the felici-
‘ ties which Heaven affords, would be im-
‘ perfect without it.’

INDEED if the happiness of Heaven were of the same nature with the joys of this world, it were fit it should be as short: because after a little enjoyment it would cloy us, and we should soon grow weary of it. But being so excellent, it would scarce be a happiness, if it were not eternal. It would imbitter the pleasures of Heaven, great as they are, to see an end of them, though it were at never so great a distance. To think that all this vast treasure of happiness would one day be exhausted, and that after so many years past in the utmost felicity, we should one day be

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be as poor and miserable again as we were once in this world; this would strangely damp and allay all the joys of Heaven itself.

‘ BLESSED therefore be GOD, and adored be his infinite goodness, who, though he has ordered that the vain and empty delights of this world should be but temporary and transient, yet hath ordained, that the great and substantial pleasures of the other, should be as lasting as they are excellent.’ And therefore, as he has declared to us in his holy word, that Heaven is *an exceeding*, so also has he assured us therein, that it is *an eternal weight of glory*. ‘ And this is that which crowns the joys of Heaven, and banishes all fear and trouble from the minds of the blessed.’

‘ O VAST eternity! how dost thou swallow up our thoughts, and entertain us at once with delight and amazement! this is the very top and highest pitch of our happiness, upon which we may stand secure, and look down with scorn upon all things here below. And oh! how small and inconsiderable do they appear
‘ to

‘ to us, when compared with the vast and
‘ endless joys of our future state! Oh!
‘ the exceeding vanity and folly of those
‘ men, who are so little concerned for
‘ eternity, that they can find in their hearts
‘ to forfeit an everlasting felicity, for the
‘ poor mean trifles of time, and the plea-
‘ sures of sin that are but for a season, and
‘ that but a very short one too!’

*Holiness of life, a necessary qualification
for the happiness of Heaven.*

HAVING thus given some account wherein the happiness of Heaven does consist (as far as we have light from scripture) I proceed now to the third thing I proposed to do on this subject, viz. to say something of the qualification for it, or what is to be done by us, in order to the attaining of it. Now this the scriptures do every where assure us, must be holiness of life in this world.

OUR constant and sincere endeavours after a holy life, are the means absolutely necessary on our part, to fit us to be made

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partakers

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partakers of eternal happiness in Heaven. The true cause of man's salvation, is the infinite mercy of GOD to man, in and through the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom therefore alone is due all the honour and glory of it. And hence the apostle tells us, *Heb. v. 9.* that Christ is *the author of eternal salvation*: but then to whom? not to all men alike in general, but to them only that obey him. So that our hearty obedience to the laws of God, is the condition necessarily required on our part, upon which we are to expect and hope for it. It is the grace of GOD in the gospel, as the apostle says in another place, which brings or offers this salvation to us; but then it is *by the denying of ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world,* that we are to wait for the blessed hope of it, *Titus ii. 11, 12.*

Now there are these two things which make holiness of life here necessary to every man, for the attainment of everlasting happiness hereafter.

First, God almighty has been pleased to make this a necessary condition of it to all men. And, *Secondly,*

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Secondly, It is a necessary qualification in the persons themselves that are to enjoy it.

First, God almighty has been pleased to make holiness of life a necessary condition of everlasting happiness to all men.

As eternal life and happiness is in itself a blessing infinitely above the deserts of the very best of men that ever lived upon the face of the earth, so would it have been the highest presumption in any one to expect it. Nothing but the free grace of the most infinitely compassionate and good Being, and his most merciful promise to mankind, could ever have given them the least encouragement to hope for it. Now since this promise of God is not absolute, but conditional; it is of the highest concern to us all, to enquire what that condition is, which he has been pleased to annex to his promise, and to make it the greatest care and concern of our lives to perform it, as we ever expect that God should make good his promise to us.

THIS then we shall find in many places of his holy word, wherein this promise is made to us, to be no other than this;

U 2

‘ That

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* That we make it our utmost endeavour
 * *to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh*
 * *and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the*
 * *fear of God, 2 Cor. vii. 1.* That is, that
 * we do with all care and diligence abstain
 * from all manner of sin, and endeavour to
 * lead a holy life, conforming ourselves to
 * the will of God, and being obedient to
 * his laws.' This he has declared by his
 apostle to be his unalterable resolution, that
without holiness no man shall see the Lord,
 Heb. xii. 14. *That if we sow to the flesh,*
we shall of the flesh reap corruption; but if
we sow to the spirit, that is, if we be sanc-
tified and renewed in our minds, by the
spirit of holiness, we shall of the spirit reap
life everlasting, Gal. vi. 8.

HE does not indeed require perfect ho-
 liness of us in this life, in order to eternal
 happiness in the next, because he knows
 that it is impossible for our frail nature to
 perform it; but he requires a sincere and
 hearty endeavour after it, and he has then
 promised to grant us his grace, to assist our
 endeavours therein, if we devoutly ask it
 of him; and if we go as far as we can our-
 selves

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selfes towards it, he will himself not fail to perfect what is wanting in us.

MANY excellent persons and truly pious souls have done this before us, and do now reap the benefit of it, in perfect peace and comfort in the separate state, and shall hereafter have all their hopes and expectations fulfilled and crowned with never-ending joy and glory, when their souls and bodies shall be once happily united again, and received up into the mansions of blessedness. And we ourselves too, shall assuredly be one day made partakers with them in the same happiness, unless we be wanting to ourselves in our endeavours after it. For so our gracious Lord has promised to every one of us, *Rev. ii. 10. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

‘ BUT if we will obstinately slight and
‘ reject all God’s gracious promises to us,
‘ and will go on to lead wicked and un-
‘ holy lives, and to allow ourselves in the
‘ practice of known sins, we thereby frus-
‘ trate our hopes of Heaven, and render
‘ ourselves unworthy of eternal life. By
‘ such means we defeat all the precious de-

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‘ signs of God’s grace and mercy towards
‘ us. He cannot save us in our sins : if
‘ we wilfully stop our ears to all his tender
‘ invitations to repentance and holiness of
‘ life, and will by our perverse continu-
‘ ance in doing evil, make ourselves un-
‘ capable of that happiness which God of-
‘ fers to us, we must thank ourselves, and
‘ ourselves only, if we be ruined and un-
‘ done for ever.’

THINK now therefore, O sinner, with
thyself, how thou wilt be able to answer it
to God and to thy own soul another day.
If now that God has promised thee eter-
nal life, a mighty blessing indeed, great
and glorious beyond all expression ; for
the obtaining of which no condition ought
to be thought hard and unreasonable, thou
shouldst yet be so foolish as to reject the
easy and tolerable terms upon which it is
promised thee ; and in breach of all thy
holy vows, as thou art a christian, rather
choose to sin against God, thy best friend,
and disobey his righteous laws, and so by
a vicious and ungodly life to plunge thy-
self into eternal misery.

BUT

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BUT this is not all, holiness of life is not only the condition upon which God has promised eternal life, but it is still further, secondly, ‘ a necessary qualification in the
‘ persons themselves that are to enjoy it.
‘ We cannot enjoy the happiness of Heaven, without a heavenly disposition. The
‘ foundation of all felicity, and the capacity for it, must be laid in the inward frame of our minds, in a god-like
‘ temper and disposition. Till the image
‘ of G o d’s holiness and goodness, which
‘ has been defaced by sin, be renewed upon our minds, we are utterly incapable
‘ of, and unqualified for, the enjoyment of
‘ the first and chief good, in which all our
‘ felicity does consist.’

‘ WE must first be like unto God, and
‘ resemble him as near as we can in those
‘ perfections wherein he is imitable by us;
‘ as in his goodness, patience, mercy, righteousness, justice, and truth, before we
‘ can be truly happy. We cannot indeed
‘ be equal to G o d in these perfections,
‘ and therefore cannot be so happy as he
‘ is; but if we would be as happy as

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‘ creatures are capable of being, we must
 ‘ endeavour to be as like God in them,
 ‘ as it is possible for creatures to be.’ These
 perfections are the very temper and dispo-
 sition of happiness; for they are the very
 nature of God, who is therefore essentially
 happy, because he is a Being constituted of
 these perfections; and so far as we imitate
 God in these, we are partakers of a divine
 nature, we dwell in God and God in us.
 These divine qualities make us fit company
 for our heavenly Father, and capable of
 the joys of Heaven, and the delights of
 that glorious place.

AGAIN, Heaven is in scripture called
an inheritance among them that are sanctified,
and the inheritance of the saints in light; so
 that it is not enough to render us fit to be
 partakers of this inheritance, that it is pro-
 mised to us; but we must likewise be qua-
 lified and prepared for it, before we can be
 meet to be made partakers of it.

‘ WHENEVER God shall be pleased to
 ‘ take a good man up into Heaven, that
 ‘ is, one that has loved God with all his
 ‘ heart and soul, and has improved his
 ‘ mind

‘ mind in the study of religion, by ac-
‘ quainting himself with God, by frequent
‘ prayers, and heavenly meditations; that
‘ has made it the business of his life, to
‘ purge his heart from all corrupt affec-
‘ tions, and has had his soul sanctified
‘ throughout by the grace of God, and
‘ has *purified himself even as he is pure*, and
‘ has thereby prepared and disposed his
‘ mind for the spiritual enjoyment of those
‘ blessed mansions above; how ready and
‘ even glad would such a one be to join
‘ immediately in partaking of them, with
‘ the happy company that he should meet
‘ there! how would his soul be ravished,
‘ to behold his blessed Saviour and Re-
‘ deemer shining in all his glory, in the
‘ midst of an innumerable company of saints
‘ and angels, and strike up presently with
‘ all that heavenly choir, in singing forth
‘ the praises of him that brought him thi-
‘ ther! In short, what infinite pleasure
‘ would he take in the place, the employ-
‘ ment, the company, and every thing that
‘ he sees there!’

BUT on the other side; if God should
admit a wicked man into the place of hap-
piness,

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piness, he would carry that along with him, which would infallibly hinder him from being happy. The sensual inclinations and desires of such persons, would meet with nothing there which would be suitable and grateful to them. The happiness of Heaven consists in such things, as a wicked man has no gust and relish for. All the delights there are pure and spiritual, which are so directly contrary to lewd and carnally-minded persons, that they would rather hate them, than take any comfort in them. In the midst of light, they would be still in darkness, and in sorrow in the midst of joys. They could not hear the heavenly music with any pleasure. They could not see the face of God; or if they did, they would not be pleased, but terrified and confounded at it, and wish with all their souls to be out of that sad place again, which it could be no comfort to them to continue in.

‘ AND indeed, how could it be otherwise? For what happiness could it be to them to see God, and to have him always in their view, who was never be-

fore

‘ fore in all their thoughts ? to be obliged
‘ to live for ever in his company, who is
‘ of a quite contrary temper and disposi-
‘ tion to themselves, whose presence they
‘ dread, and whom, while they were in
‘ this world, they could never endure to
‘ think upon ?’

AND then again, as to the company they should meet with there, there could be no happiness to be expected from them by a wicked man ; his fierce and unruly passions, his envy and malice, his covetousness and ambition, his lusts and irregular desires, finding nothing there to answer them, would not only make himself uneasy, but would disturb the peace and quiet of others also, and raise storms in those calm regions. So that even in Heaven, he would be but like the rich man in hell, as he is represented in the gospel, *St Luke xvi.* tormented with a continual thirst of something else that is not there to be had, and would not be able, amidst all that plenty and treasures of joy, with which that happy place does abound, to find so much as one drop of suitable pleasure and delight,

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delight, to quench and allay his ardent desires, because there is nothing there to gratify them withal.

‘ As ever therefore we desire to go to
‘ Heaven when we die, we must take care
‘ to mortify all our irregular lusts and
‘ passions, while we live here in this
‘ world, and to cleanse ourselves from all
‘ filthiness of flesh and spirit; by continu-
‘ ally practising all those excellent virtues
‘ and graces which our God and Saviour
‘ have commanded us, and to get our souls
‘ endowed with such holy dispositions, as
‘ will fit us to behold the light of God’s
‘ countenance, and to solace ourselves with
‘ it, as the highest object of our desires,
‘ to all eternity. For we must remember,
‘ that if we do not begin this work here,
‘ of *purifying ourselves as God is pure*, it will
‘ never be perfected hereafter.’

‘ S U C H dispositions as we carry along
‘ with us out of this world, will stick by
‘ us for ever. Indeed if they be good,
‘ the degrees of them shall then be per-
‘ fected; but if they be bad, they shall
‘ never be altered. If the image of God
‘ be

‘ be renewed upon us in this life, we shall
‘ be changed from glory to glory in the
‘ other, by the spirit of the Lord: but if
‘ we be utterly unlike to GOD when we
‘ die, death will make no change in us for
‘ the better: we shall go to our place, and
‘ inherit the portion of finners. We did
‘ not endeavour to be like GOD, when it
‘ was in our power, by the assistance of
‘ GOD’s grace to do so, and had frequent
‘ calls from GOD to that purpose, but we
‘ turned a deaf ear to them all, and would
‘ not be persuaded to secure our eternal
‘ happiness, by being obedient to them;
‘ and therefore we can never now be ad-
‘ mitted to the blessed sight and enjoyment
‘ of him. For there is a direct and eter-
‘ nal opposition between the holy nature of
‘ GOD and an impure creature; and till
‘ this opposition be removed, we can have
‘ no communion with him. And it will
‘ be too late to endeavour to remove this
‘ opposition between GOD and an impure
‘ soul in the other world; because our
‘ condition will then be concluded, and
‘ we shall remain for ever such as we have
‘ made ourselves while we were in this
‘ world.

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‘ world. We must be prepared before
‘ hand for the heavenly state, or it will be
‘ impossible that Heaven and we should
‘ ever agree. We may as well see with-
‘ out eyes, or hear without ears, as pre-
‘ tend to enjoy Heaven, without an hea-
‘ venly disposition, it being by the nature
‘ of things, as well as by the laws of God,
‘ ordained, that *no unclean thing shall enter*
‘ *into the kingdom of heaven*, and that with-
‘ out holiness none shall see God.’

*Of the different degrees of glory and
happinefs in Heaven.*

I Proceed now to the fourth thing that I
designed, which was to shew, that
there are different degrees of glory and
happinefs in Heaven.

MEN shall be rewarded in the next life,
not only according to the kind and quality
of their actions in this, considered in gene-
ral as good and evil; and so good shall be
rewarded to the good, and evil to the evil;
(for thus our Saviour teaches, *Matt. xvi.*
27. The Son of man shall come in the glory of
his

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his Father, with his angels, and shall reward every man according to his works : and Rev. xxii. 12, 13. *Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, tells St John, Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to render to every man according as his works shall be ;* and Rom. vi. 23. *The wages of sin is death*) but the degree of reward shall likewise be proportioned to the degrees of good and evil that men shall have done here on earth ; that is, a more eminent degree of piety and holiness here, shall be rewarded with a proportionably greater share of glory and happiness hereafter ; and greater and more heinous sins, shall then be loaded with greater and heavier punishments.

I SHALL chiefly consider the former of these in this place, that good men shall hereafter receive in Heaven a reward proportionable to the degree of their holiness and obedience to God in this world.

THIS is plainly asserted in abundance of places of the holy scriptures. I shall mention some of them. Thus says the Prophet Daniel, chap. xii. 3. *They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament,*
and

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and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever. Which is much the same with what St Paul expressly affirms concerning the different glory of the saints at the resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42. *There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory: so also is the resurrection of the dead.* In these words, the apostle, no doubt, sets forth the disparity that will be at the resurrection, even among the glorious bodies of the saints, some shining with brighter, and some with fainter rays of glory; as among the heavenly lights, some are more glorious than others.

‘ To the same sense have been generally expounded by many of the ancient fathers, and some of the most learned modern interpreters, those words of our Saviour, *John xiv. 2. In my Father’s house are many mansions.* The multitude of mansions in Heaven, seem hardly intelligible, without admitting a difference of degrees in the heavenly glory. For if all the saints should be placed in one and

‘ the

‘ the same degree of bliss, they would all
‘ have one and the same mansion in Hea-
‘ ven; but when it is said, that in our
‘ *heavenly Father’s house there are many man-*
‘ *sions*, it cannot well be understood in any
‘ other sense, but that there are there some
‘ higher, and some lower mansions, ac-
‘ cording to the measure of proficiency
‘ in virtue and goodness, which men have
‘ attained to in this life.’

‘ HENCE, says a learned father of the
‘ church,’ “ There are with the Lord ma-
“ ny rewards and mansions, according to
“ the proportion of mens lives.” ‘ And
‘ thus, says another,’ “ How are there
“ many mansions with the Father, but ac-
“ cording to the variety of the good works
“ of men?” Hence also our Saviour pro-
mises to the apostles, that at the great and
general renovation of all things, *when Christ*
shall sit on the throne of his glory, as the
judge of men and angels, *they also should*
sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve
tribes of Israel, St Matt. xix. 28. Intend-
ing, no doubt, thereby to express to them,
‘ That as the office of an apostle, was an
‘ office of the highest service, labour, and

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‘ difficulty; so they who should perform
 ‘ it well, should have the highest reward
 ‘ for so doing; should then be exalted also
 ‘ so as to sit in the next degree of glory
 ‘ and power to himself, the King of glory.’

THIS again is plainly intimated to us by our Saviour, in the parable of the talents, *St Luke xix. 15. He that had gained ten talents, was made ruler over ten cities; and he that had gained five talents, was made ruler over five cities, ver. 16, 17, 18, 19.* The reward which the Lord bestowed upon his servants, bearing proportion to the several improvements made by each of them.

AND upon this principle, the apostle *St Paul* presseth the *Corinthians* to be very liberal and bountiful to their distressed brethren, because according to the degree of their charity, would be the degree of their reward, *2 Cor. ix. 6.* this I say, *He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully;* clearly implying, that the more good we do in this world, the more abundant shall be our reward in the next: and so on the contrary, the thinner our seeds of charity, and other good works are sown
 here,

here, the lesser will be our harvest of glory hereafter. I think nothing can be spoken more plainly to this purpose, than those places of scripture which I have mentioned.

YET still, to add a further confirmation to it, it may not be amiss here to take notice, that though all the angels of Heaven are glorious creatures, yet there are among them some higher in dignity, and some lower; some are greater, and others are lesser; some are angels, and some archangels, that is, chief angels, some that have a pre-eminence above the rest.

Now seeing we are sure that in the future state *we shall be like unto the angels*, Luke xx. 36. why should we not be so in this respect also? seeing in the angelical polity, there are divers orders, ranks, and degrees, why should we imagine that the communion of saints shall be a levelled society? This is utterly incredible. And therefore for these reasons, ‘ the catholic church has ever held it as an undoubted truth, that there shall be a disparity of rewards in the life to come.’

NOTWITHSTANDING the plainness of the foregoing truth some have thought fit to call it into question, alledging such reasons as the following, for their so doing.

‘FIRST, That since the merits of Christ’s death, by which eternal life is purchased for all, are of virtue sufficient to purchase the highest degree of glory for them all; there is therefore, they say, no doubt but that all will receive the same effect from them; that is, that all will be made partakers of the same degrees of glory, and no difference made between them in that respect.’

‘In answer to this, it may be said, that it is very true indeed that Christ is the common Saviour of all, his blood is alike sufficient, and was alike shed for the redemption of all; but it does not therefore follow, that the rewards purchased by that blood, will be bestowed on all alike, any more than that the same degrees of holiness and sanctification, will, through the efficacy of that blood, be alike communicated to all. For eternal life and happiness does not accrue to us, by way of necessary and natural re-

sult,

‘ sult, but from the all-sufficient merits of
‘ Christ’s obedience and sufferings; but a
‘ covenant of grace, and mercy, and life
‘ eternal is thereby procured, ratified, and
‘ established between God and the sons of
‘ men; and the condition of this covenant
‘ on their part, is faith working by love,
‘ or a faith fruitful of obedience and good
‘ works. And thus the scripture has de-
‘ clared, that *Christ is the author of eternal*
‘ *salvation to them that believe and obey him;*
‘ and to them only. So that obedience is
‘ the condition to be performed on our
‘ part, and according to the degrees of
‘ our holiness and obedience, shall be the
‘ degrees of our happiness.’

‘ It is indeed by this covenant of infi-
‘ nite mercy in Christ Jesus alone, that our
‘ imperfect good works are made a condi-
‘ tion of so excellent a reward, as the fu-
‘ ture glory; for nothing that we can do,
‘ can possibly deserve so great a reward.
‘ The highest degree of grace and good-
‘ ness, can never be equal to the lowest
‘ degree of glory, so as to deserve it.
‘ There being no proportion between an
‘ eternal reward, and a short momentary
‘ service,

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‘ service, though it be that of the best of
 ‘ saints. But it is the mercy, the rich
 ‘ mercy, the royal bounty and liberality of
 ‘ G O D, expressed in the same covenant,
 ‘ that assigns to greater degrees of grace
 ‘ and goodness here, greater degrees of
 ‘ glory hereafter. And accordingly it is
 ‘ declared in the several places of scripture
 ‘ abovementioned, that thus it shall be.’

ANOTHER objection, against the disparity of rewards in the life to come, is usually raised from the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, mentioned by our Saviour, *St Matt. xx.* where it is said, that they that came in at the last hour, received as much as those that came in at the first, and had born the heat and burden of the day. Whence they infer, that the future reward, signified by this penny, shall not be proportioned according to the difference of mens works, but be one and the same to all.

IN answer to this, it may truly be said, that this parable belongs not at all to the matter in question; as if thereby was designed to be shown, that all good men shall have equal degrees of glory in the other world;

world: whereas the scope of it is plainly intended to another purpose, *viz.* to justify God's proceedings, in the dispensation of his grace towards the church of the *Jews*, and that of the *Gentiles*: the former being greatly offended, and murmuring, that the latter, who were called in the last age of the world, should partake of the benefits and blessings of the *Messias*, equally with them, who were the ancient people of God. It not being here intended to be intimated to us, that all good men shall hereafter be admitted to equal degrees of glory in Heaven; but only to shew us, that the *Gentiles*, who were to be called long after the *Jews*, should be admitted to the same privileges, and made partakers of the same blessings which were promised the *Jews*, with whom the covenant was first made.

It appearing thus plainly from the holy scriptures, that there shall be a disparity of rewards in the life to come, and that the degrees of mens happiness hereafter, shall bear a proportion to the degrees of their holiness in this life; if any further proof of this were necessary, it might very well be supposed,

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supposed, both from the justice and equity of God, and from the reason of the thing itself.

FROM the former of these it may very well be supposed, that those good men, who by an early piety, and an uninterrupted course of goodness all their lives long, have excelled in the works of the Lord in this world, shall hereafter be distinguished and honoured with greater degrees of glory in the next. For tho' our Saviour does indeed say in general, *Matt. xiii. 43.* that *the righteous shall shine in the kingdom of their father*; that is, that all the saints that are admitted to everlasting life, shall be glorious therein; yet, I hope, it is not at all improper to believe, but that such of them as had shewn an uncommon zeal for the glory of God, and were more eminent for sanctity; and were never in all their lives defiled by any great and enormous sins, shall be honoured above those in the heavenly mansions, who may possibly in their life-time, through the frailty of human nature, have been guilty of many such, tho' upon their true repentance for them afterwards, God had been pleased, of his infi-

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nite mercy, through the merits of their Saviour, to admit them to pardon first, and then to happiness. Will not they who have endured a great fight of afflictions, or who have gone through the fiery trial of martyrdom, have in Heaven more reason to rejoice, and be happier than others? inasmuch, as they will, according to *St Peter*, 1 epist. chap iv. 13. *be partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, and he on that account highly exalted, Phil. ii. 9. they may be glad also with exceeding joy.*

FROM the reason of the thing indeed, it cannot well be otherwise, but that the more pure and holy men have been in this world, the more capable they will be of the happiness of the next, as being thereby the better prepared and disposed for a fuller enjoyment of God, wherein, no doubt, one great and substantial part of the happiness of Heaven will consist. 'For if a pure spiritual mind, free from all carnal lusts and passions, be absolutely necessary to put us into a fit capacity of relishing those refined joys that are above, it will from hence naturally follow, that the

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‘ more spiritualized and exalted mens dispositions are, and the better prepared and fitted their souls are for the enjoyment of the heavenly pleasures, the more pleasing, delightful, and satisfactory will be their taste and perception of them, and consequently the greater, more enlarged, and comprehensive, will their happiness be.’

‘ THE emanations of happiness indeed are diffused every where from God, as the common fountain of celestial bliss, and perhaps do fill all the saints alike; but then, though every capacity shall be filled, yet their capacities and dispositions for them being unequal, some may receive a greater measure and proportion of them than others; and so consequently be more happy than they are. Just as the light of the sun is the same, and yet its rays are received in a greater or lesser quantity, according to the make and texture of the body it shines upon.’

I HAVE now only this one thing more, which I think proper to take notice of on this head, and that is this, that though there shall be different degrees of glory in
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the life to come, yet this difference shall occasion no uneasiness among the saints above, but all shall be entirely happy; because to every saint in that blessed place his own degree shall be to him a satisfactory beatitude.

THIS has been thought to be represented to us by the *Israelites* gathering of manna (that food of Heaven) in the wilderness, of which we read, *Exod. xvi. 18.* that *he that gathered much, had nothing over; and he that gathered little, had no lack; they gathered every man according to his own eating.*

THIS may likewise be expressed by a common similitude, of many vessels of different sizes and capacities, some greater, and some lesser; when if all of them be filled, it is the same thing, one is then not fuller than another. So here; if the blessed saints above shall all receive their full proportion of happiness, which God shall be pleased to dispense to them, according to their capacities, from those rivers of pleasure, which flow from his right hand, there can be no reason to doubt, but that all will be entirely pleased and satisfied with that proportion. Even the lowest degree

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of happiness in those blessed mansions, being infinitely above what their utmost wishes, while here on earth, could have aspired after.

AND then besides, though in this lower world indeed, such as are of meaner spirits, and more narrow-hearted, are apt to repine at the promotion of others, and to envy the felicity which they see them enjoy above themselves: yet among the blessed in Heaven, there are no such peevish and ill-natured qualities, as discontent and repining, pride and disdain, grudging or envy, but all are full of contentment, of joy, and of thankfulness. They shall all there be joined in such perfect love, that they who are seated in the higher mansions of glory, shall not look down with contempt or disdain on those that are beneath them; nor shall they that are below, lift up an envious eye towards those that are above them; ‘but there shall be such a perfect harmony among them all, that each shall rejoice as much in the happiness of others, as in his own, and take as great delight therein, as if it really were so.’ And so all together, shall make

make up, though in different notes, one sweet harmonious concert in the praises of God, the fountain of their blifs.

For why may not this be so among the saints hereafter, as we are sure it is among the holy angels now? We know that after the resurrection, the saints shall be made like unto the angels, and enjoy the same life immortal as they do, and be incorporated into their blessed society. ‘ Now in
‘ that celestial society, archangels and an-
‘ gels, cherubim and seraphin, thrones and
‘ dominions, and the lower orders of those
‘ blessed spirits, do not disagree among
‘ themselves, though they differ from one
‘ another in honour and dignity; but, on
‘ the contrary, they perfectly love and de-
‘ light in each other, and all in their God,
‘ being always ready, in their several sta-
‘ tions, chearfully to execute the will and
‘ pleasure of their great Lord and Master,
‘ whose ministers they are: and do join all
‘ together, night and day, with inexpress-
‘ sible pleasure, in *giving blessing, honour,*
‘ *and glory, unto him that sitteth upon the*
‘ *throne, and unto the lamb for ever and*
‘ *ever.*’

*What the consideration of these things
does require from us.*

AND thus having gone through the several particulars, which I proposed to treat of with regard to Heaven, that blessed place, where the souls of good men shall be happy for ever and ever, I come now, in the fifth and last place, to add an application suitable to the whole, by shewing, what the consideration of these things does require from us. And,

FIRST, Since we are certainly assured, that there is such a glorious place as Heaven, and such a state of happiness there, as is infinitely beyond whatever was seen, or known, or heard of in this world; for so the apostle tells us, *1 Cor. ii. 9. that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things that God has prepared for them that love him.* This should teach us frequently to entertain our minds with the serious thoughts of it, which would then engage us to set our affections chiefly upon it. It is not enough for us to believe the happiness

ness of the life to come, to make us heartily endeavour after the attainment of it, unless we also lay it in the balance with all the seeming felicities of this present life; and by frequent and serious consideration of the one and the other, do at last arrive at this settled judgment, that Heaven is infinitely to be preferred before this earth; its solid and eternal joys, before the empty, temporary, and transient pleasures of this world.

MEN do indeed generally pretend to believe this, but then the great unhappiness is this, that the far greater part of them, do not suffer their belief to have that influence upon their lives, which it ought to have. They are so taken up with the enjoyment of the temporary good things of this world, which are present and at hand (whereas the other are future, and, as they apprehend, at a distance from them) that they heedlessly let whole days, and months, and years pass away, without hardly ever so much as once seriously thinking of them, and qualifying themselves to be partakers of the infinitely more valuable pleasures and joys of another life.

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Now there is nothing can be a more effectual cure of this folly and madness, in the generality of mankind, than the frequent and serious consideration I am pressing them to. For this would make things future to be, as it were, always present to them. This would be apt to rouse them from that fatal slumber they are in, and to make them thus reason with themselves; ‘ If these things be true, and will be one day found to be so, why should they not be to me as if they were already present? Why should I not be as careful to serve God, and keep his commands, as if Heaven were open to my view?’

For faith alone of itself, is an ineffectual virtue, unless it be actuated and enlivened by such considerations as these. And from hence it is greatly to be feared, that among those multitudes of professed Christians that perish everlastingly, there are as many, at least, that miscarry for want of a serious consideration of the things they believe, as for want of the belief itself; and that unthinking believers take up a great room in the regions of darkness.

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THEY therefore that would approve themselves to GOD to be Christians indeed, and do desire to be his faithful servants here; such as he has in his infinite mercy promised to admit to be partakers of those inexpressible pleasures which are at his right hand for evermore, with all his blessed saints above; they should entertain themselves frequently with the meditation of eternity, and in their most serious thoughts often compare the future everlasting state with this present vanishing life. This could hardly fail of having a mighty influence upon their lives, and of hastening them to prepare themselves to enter upon the enjoyment of that unchangeable state of bliss hereafter, to their inexpressible comfort, whenever it should please GOD to put an end to their continuance in this transitory, vain, and uncertain life here.

SECONDLY, Since we are assured that we shall be raised to higher degrees of glory hereafter, according as we shall excel in greater degrees of holiness and goodness here: this should excite and stir us up to a more diligent, earnest, and zealous pursuit after a greater increase of grace and virtue
here,

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here, and make us labour after a more eminent proficiency in the ways of righteousness and goodness in this life; that so we may be the better qualified and disposed for greater degrees of happiness and glory in the next.

MEN are usually very industrious for the things of this life, to be rich and great in the world. Nay, and what pains and labours do they not take, and what hazards do they not often expose themselves to, that they may but excel their neighbours in the gaudy honours, vain titles, and great possessions of this uncertain world; and yet these must all be parted with when death comes, and they and all their honours be forgotten, as though they had never been? And therefore, how greatly does this accuse the sloth, and condemn the folly of the generality of mankind, that they will not labour half so much for an eternal inheritance in Heaven above, as men ordinarily do for these corruptible things below? Did we but value Heaven half so much as it deserves, we should take infinitely more pains for it. How should it quicken our endeavours, to have such a
reward

reward set before us ; to have crowns and scepters in our view ; not fading ones, as those of this world are, but infinitely more precious and more lasting ?

WOULD we but often represent to our minds the glorious things of another world, what fervors should we feel in our hearts, to do the will of G O D, whereby they are to be acquired ? We should do it almost with the same constancy, vigour, readiness and delight, as the angels do who continually behold the face of their Father. We should shun no labour that comes in our way, and is within our power to execute, whereby we might glorify God, and do good to others.

ESPECIALLY when we consider, that all the good works that ever we do, shall be recorded in the faithful register of the divine omniscience, and not one of them be forgotten, or miss of its reward. But, on the contrary, that the greater, and more industrious, and diligent our labour has been in God's service in this life, the larger and more abundant shall our reward be in the life to come. How great soever our labour be in the business of religion and
charity,

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charity, none of it shall be lost labour, or in vain in the Lord. All our habits and exercises of real piety and charity, every degree of grace we advance to here shall raise us to higher degrees of blessedness in the kingdom of Heaven, and make us shine with so much the brighter lustre in the future glory.

How should a vigorous sense of these truths awaken, and rouse us out of our remissness and negligence in the business of religion, which does too too often seize upon us? How should the firm persuasion of our future happiness, actuate all the powers of our souls, and be continually inspiring us with new vigour in the ways of holiness and virtue? How should the thought quicken our resolutions, and confirm our purposes of obedience, that if we have our fruit unto holiness here, our end shall be everlasting life hereafter? How often would it rouse us from our vain diversions and unprofitable amusements, and call us to our prayers and devotions? How many precious hours of our time would it redeem from being spent and lost in vanity and folly? How studiously should we seek
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for, and readily embrace all opportunities of doing good! for indeed, every such opportunity is an advantage offered us by the good providence of God, farther to enrich our souls, and to add to our heavenly store and treasure; the only true treasure that shall never fail, nor be taken away from us.

ONE caution should only here be observed, that we are not to expect from God a greater reward for our services, as if by their greater excellency, they did deserve a greater notice to be taken of them, above the services of other men: for we must remember, that the very best of our services are but imperfect; and that *when we have done all those things that were commanded us, we are still but unprofitable servants, and have done no more than was our duty to do*, St Luke xvii. 10. But we are to look upon every addition that is made to our happiness, above that of others, as purely owing to the free and undeserved favour of God; and to him to return our unfeigned thanks for it, who for our encouragement to aim at greater degrees of holiness, has been graciously pleased, out of his own infinite goodness, to promise
greater

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greater degrees of glory to some above others.

THIRDLY, Since such an exceeding great and unspeakable happiness in the next life is promised to holiness in this, this should teach us to be exceeding diligent in exerting our utmost endeavours, to mortify all evil affections and inclinations in us, and to watch and pray against all temptations to sin, that we may not be overcome by them; which we know would endanger our losing so great a felicity for ever. This the holy scriptures do every where earnestly inculcate and press upon us. There we are commanded *to strive to enter in at the strait gate; and to labour for that meat which endureth to everlasting life; to work out our salvation with fear and trembling; to press forward toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure, that so an entrance may be ministered to us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and to watch and pray always, that we may be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of man.*

WHILE

WHILE we are here in this world, our corrupt nature, which we always carry about us, is continually pressing us to gratify the evil inclinations of it. And by the help of those, the great enemy of our souls is always contriving how to take all advantages against us, and studies how he may lay his snares most effectually, to betray us into the commission of sin, that we may offend God, and so ruin our hopes of everlasting happiness. For this end, he employs all his emissaries, wicked spirits, and wicked men, to tempt us to folly: so that we ought to stand continually upon our guard, and to look about us, and use all possible care and diligence to avoid those temptations to sin, wherewith we are surrounded on every side; lest we should be on a sudden surprised by them, and caught in his snares, before we are aware of it.

NOR must we only watch against temptations to sin, and carefully avoid all occasions which would lead us into it, but we must deny ourselves all those lawful liberties, which do too nearly approach it, and impose upon ourselves such voluntary restraints and severities, as have a natural
tendency

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tendency to check our unruly appetites, and to break the force of our vicious inclinations, so as we may not be led captive by them, but may by degrees get an entire dominion over them.

AND as we must avoid sinning and doing evil ourselves, so also must we resolve and heartily endeavour, in our several stations, to prevent others from committing sin, as much as lies in our power: by our own good examples exciting them to virtue and piety, and encouraging them to fear God, and to be obedient to his most holy laws, that his name may be glorified in the world, and their own present and future happiness be more effectually secured by it.

AND to this end, we must carefully observe all opportunities which the providence of God offers to us of doing good in this manner, and readily take hold of, and embrace them, and frequently by prayer beg his assistance to enable us to the doing of it. This will be highly acceptable to God, and procure his favour and blessing to us the rest of our lives, and turn greatly to our account another day.

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BUT perhaps some will be apt to say, this is a thing exceeding hard to be done, and will make life a very troublesome and uneasy thing, to be always upon our guard against committing any sin, and to be striving continually against our natural inclinations, and endeavour to overcome them by mortification and self-denial; and then, by endeavouring to do good to others, we may oftentimes put ourselves to a great deal of unnecessary trouble; and perhaps get no thanks for it afterwards.

IT is possible, indeed, that these things will occasion us some trouble and uneasiness in our lives; but then we should remember, that this life is a warfare; which implies, that something that is troublesome and uneasy is to be undergone by us in it. We should consider too, that nothing which is excellent can be done without some pains and trouble: and we may observe likewise, that the grace of God, joined with our hearty endeavours, has oftentimes made things more easy to us, than we could at first have imagined. And besides, the good providence of God oftentimes satisfieth

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tisfieth with good things, to allay the difficulties of a sincerely good and religious life : and gives men abundantly more real pleasure in it, than all the ways of wickedness can possibly afford to those that are engaged in them.

THIS all the generous and holy souls that ever have been in the world, have experienced, and have found infinite satisfaction in living a virtuous and righteous life, in the fear of GOD, and in doing good to others; and so may we certainly do, if we will be so wise as to follow their most excellent examples. And if this be not enough to engage us to follow them, let us still farther consider, that to do good is to be like GOD himself, who takes great pleasure therein. And surely it is worth some pains to imitate the best of Beings, in one of his most favourite and darling excellencies.

THESE certainly are all most noble encouragements to go and do likewise; and yet there is one more, which, if we have any true love for ourselves, any real concern for our own greatest happiness, and do heartily desire to do ourselves the great-
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est good that possibly we can, ought to have an influence upon us to this purpose; not to be gainsaid nor resisted; and it is this, we should look forward to the end of this life, which cannot be far off to any of us, and take a view of that glorious reward which remains hereafter for all those, who will now take the pains to live up to those holy precepts which G O D has given them, of eschewing evil themselves, and of encouraging others to do the same; and then consider, how all that is troublesome now in our duty, will then be entirely removed and at an end; and an infinite amends will be made for it, when that which follows will be inexpressible pleasure, and *joy unspeakable and full of glory, with God, and angels, and saints, for ever and ever.* And this alone, one would think, should be enough to make us despise all the little troubles and uneasinesses we can meet with here, by leading a holy life ourselves, and promoting true piety in others also; and with a vigorous resolution push forward to partake of that everlasting happiness, which God has prepared to reward

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and crown all our religious and pious labours here, at the end of our warfare.

FOURTHLY, The consideration of the foregoing particulars, should help to support and comfort us under all the miseries and afflictions of this present life. There are so many occasions for sorrow and trouble, which do frequently happen to all sorts and degrees of men in this world, by the evils and afflictions of ourselves or friends, that it has been justly esteemed and called by some, a valley of tears. Such the wise and good providence of God has ordered it to be, since the entrance of sin into it, by the fall of our first parents. Now these are certainly very graciously intended by him for our good many ways; and ought to be considered by us as such: yet it cannot be denied, but that they do at present give occasion to many great uneasinesses to mankind, and do make many of them pass their days here in sorrow and trouble.

To relieve them under which calamity, and to make them bear their affliction with patience, and humble submission to the will

will of God, nothing would more effectually conduce, than the frequent consideration of that transcendent happiness and glory, which all good men shall be admitted to in the next world. The incomparably greater good of that, will, with a wise and considerate mind, weigh down all the evils of this. And well it may do so, since the scripture assures us, that there is no comparison between them. *Rom. viii. 18. The sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.* The evils of this life afflict men more or less, according as the soul is fortified with considerations proper to support it under them.

WHEN we therefore consider, that we are but strangers and pilgrims here, and are travelling continually to our heavenly country, which is our home, where we shall in a few years, and perhaps in a much shorter time, arrive: and shall then meet with all the delights we can desire, infinitely greater and more lasting, than we can possibly enjoy in this world; it ought not to trouble us over much, if in our journey

journey we are sometimes forced to struggle with storms and tempests; and at others to wade through foul ways, which are but the common calamities to which all travellers are subject. These difficulties and inconveniencies will soon be at an end, and after a few days be quite forgotten, as if they had never been,

AND when we are safely landed in our own country, with what pleasure shall we look back upon those rough and boisterous seas which we have escaped? And to be sure, when we are come to our Father's house, we shall find from him so much the kinder welcome, by how much the greater the difficulties and troubles have been, which we have gone through in our journey to him. So the Apostle St Paul assures us, that *our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, 2 Cor. iv. 17. And then what great matter is it, though we do suffer awhile in this world, if we can but escape the endless and unspeakable torments of the next? If we have not our good things in this life, we
may

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may rest satisfied that infinitely greater and better things are reserved for us in that which is to come; for thus our religion does abundantly assure us that it shall be.

AND this it was which made the holy saints and martyrs, among the primitive christians, to undergo their sufferings with so much chearfulness, and even to glory in tribulation, and to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that in Heaven, they had a better and more enduring substance.

SINCE such is to be the happy lot of all good men hereafter, let them not be cast down, and despond under the short afflictions, they may at any time meet withal in this world; but let them submit with patience to whatever God is pleased to ordain for them here; and then looking beyond this dark cloudy scene of things, let them lift up their heads with joy, to behold that bright and glorious day, which will shortly break forth upon them, when they shall never more be liable to storms and tempests, but shall find all things serene,

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rene, and calm, and beautiful, and joyous in Heaven to all eternity.

LASTLY, The consideration of the foregoing particulars, should help to arm us against the fear of death. The vast alteration which death makes in the condition of all men, whereby we are assured that some do pass from this transitory life into a state of eternal happiness, and some into a state of eternal misery, may well create in men a great anxiety and solicitude for themselves, when they see it approaching towards them: especially when from their behaviour in this world, they are any ways doubtful and uncertain, to which of these two states it may consign them. Nay, even to good men themselves, who have taken care by a holy life to prepare themselves for this great change, the thoughts of death are oftentimes very dismal, thro' their own natural fears of it; and they have never more need of comfort and encouragement, than when they are going to conflict with this last enemy.

Now the best relief against those fears, are the comfortable hopes which God has given

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given us in his holy word of a blessed immortality, which is to follow at the conclusion of this life. These good men may ordinarily assure themselves of, from the gracious promise of God; though it may sometimes happen, through their own timorous nature, that they may not receive that full benefit of them at that time, which might be expected. But where these have their full force, nothing can be desired more effectual to relieve the fainting spirits of dying men, and to reconcile them to death, and in a great measure to take away the terror of it. For he that has good reason to hope, that his death will be a passage only to a future happy state to all eternity, may joyfully welcome the messengers of it; as bringing him the best news which he ever received in all his life; and no man can stay behind in this life, with half the comfort that this man leaves it.

For the man that is fully satisfied of his future bliss, is already in a manner entred into Heaven, has begun to take possession of glory, and has, as it were, his blessed Saviour in his arms, and may say with old Simeon, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant*

A a

depart

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depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. Oh blessed are the souls that are in such a case! who would not wish to be one of that happy number? The way to be so, is to live holily, and so to be well prepared for that happy change, whenever it shall please God to call us to enter upon it. Then may we think with joy on those great and glorious things which God has prepared for them that love him; and please ourselves with the delightful hopes of being one day admitted to be partakers of that inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, which fadeth not away, reserved for us in the heavens.

LET us therefore frequently think on this, that it is as certain we shall die, as if an express messenger should come to every one of us from the other world, and tell us so. And if we would be happy after death, let us always live as those who must die. That so when the time of our departure shall come, we may not dread it, but meet it with joy and transport, and say of it, as a most excellent person did, on this occasion, with which I shall conclude:

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‘ O BLESSED time! when all tears shall
‘ be wiped away from our eyes, and death
‘ and sorrow shall be no more; when mor-
‘ tality shall be swallowed up of life, and
‘ we shall enter upon the possession of all
‘ that happiness and glory which God has
‘ promised, and our faith hath believed,
‘ and our hopes have raised us to the ex-
‘ pectation of; when we shall be eased of
‘ all our pains, and resolved of all our
‘ doubts, and be purged from all our sins,
‘ and be freed from all our fears, and be
‘ happy beyond all our hopes, and have all
‘ that happiness secured to us, beyond the
‘ power of time and change; when we
‘ shall know God and other things with-
‘ out study, and love him and one another
‘ without measure, and serve and praise
‘ him without weariness, and obey his will
‘ without the least reluctance: and shall
‘ still be more and more delighted in the
‘ knowing, and loving, and praising, and
‘ obeying of God to all eternity.’

WHICH happiness may we all be par-
takers of, through the infinite merits of
our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ! to whom

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with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, three persons, but one God, be all honour, glory, and praise, for ever and ever. *Amen, Amen.*

Prayers for the enjoyment of the happiness in Heaven.

O God, who hast prepared for them that love thee such good things as pass mens understanding; pour into my heart such love towards thee, that I loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that I can desire, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O Almighty and most merciful Lord God, who didst send thy dear Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ into the world, to be made man, that by the shedding of his most precious blood upon the cross, he might atone for the sins of all mankind, and purchase eternal salvation in Heaven for us; grant that I may never forfeit that inestimable blessing, by leading a vicious and ungodly life; but may daily endeavour,
by

by the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, to live so righteously, soberly, and godly in this present world, as may secure thy favour to me, so long as thou shalt continue me in this mortal state; that so when thou shalt please, in thy wise and good providence, to put an end to my being here, I may be prepared for that happy, glorious, and immortal one, which is above with thee in Heaven, where I may with thy holy angels and saints sing thy praises to all eternity.

O heavenly Father, grant this I most humbly beseech thee, for thy own infinite compassion's sake, and the infinite merits of my dear Saviour, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all glory and honour, for ever and ever. *Amen.*





A
DISCOURSE
UPON
HELL.



Come now to consider the last of those Four Last Things, as they are called, Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell, which I proposed to treat of in the most plain and affecting manner that I could, in order to persuade men most seriously to consider the vast importance of them to every man living; and from thence learn to endeavour to be prepared for them, in such a manner, as may rather afford comfort and joy to them, when they are going to leave this world, than fill them with sad apprehensions concerning them.

Hell

Hell is a real, fixed, determined place.

NOW that in treating of this, I may proceed in the most plain and easy method, I shall,

FIRST, Endeavour to shew, that Hell is a real, fixed, determined place. As GOD has prepared a place where good men shall live for ever hereafter in happiness, with himself and all his holy angels and saints, called in the scriptures by the name of Heaven: so has he also appointed another place of a quite different nature from that, whereinto wicked men, at the conclusion of this world, shall be cast, there to undergo the heavy wrath and vengeance of GOD, together with the devil and his angels for ever; and this is called Hell.

It goes under several names in the holy scriptures.

IT is called by St Luke, chap. xvi. 28. *the place of torment*, and by St John, Rev. xx. 1. *the bottomless pit*: and in *Isaiab*, chap. xxx. 33. *Tophet*: in allusion to that

dismal place, where the idolatrous, cruel, and unnatural *Israelites*, were wont to cause *their children to pass through the fire to Moloch*, that is, to burn them in sacrifice to that idol; beating drums while that sad solemnity was performed, that the doleful shriekings of the poor children might not be heard. Thence that name *Tophet* was given to the place, being derived from *Toph*, which signifies a drum. And as for the reason now mentioned, it is called *Tophet* in the Old Testament; so in the New it is called *Gebenna*, from the valley of *Hinnom*, wherein this *Tophet* was, *Matt. v. 22.*

As to the situation of this place of torment, which we now call Hell, there have indeed been several conjectures about it; but I shall not undertake to determine any thing concerning it: nor do I think it proper to mention those conjectures. For since God has not been pleased expressly to declare where it is situated, I think it cannot serve any good purpose at all to mention them; especially since being bare conjectures, all of them may be false, for ought we know; to be sure they are all doubtful, and not one of them to be depended upon above the other.

The

The dreadful miseries of this place.

SECONDLY, I come now in the second place to consider the dreadful miseries of this place, which in the scripture is called Hell. For whatever doubt we may be in about the local situation of it, yet this we may be sure of, that those descriptions of the dreadful miseries and torments of it, which are given us in the holy scriptures, shall all be found to have something fully answering to them (though not perhaps in the very letter of them) by all those wretched creatures, who shall by the just judgment of God be doomed to endure them, for their wicked and ungodly deeds, and impenitency in this world.

Now the descriptions and representations of the miseries of Hell, which we meet with in the word of God, are such as these. They are sometimes expressed by wrath, *the wrath of God*, John iii. 36. *the wrath to come*, Matt. iii. 7. 1 Thess. i. 10. And those miserable creatures, that are to undergo those punishments, are called *vessels of wrath*, Rom. ix. 22. and they are said to
be

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be appointed to wrath, 1 Theff. v. 9. And those punishments are therefore called *wrath*, because they are the effects of God's wrath and indignation. They are also said to be such as are *prepared for the devil and his angels*, Matt. xxv. 41.

AND the horror of the place where they are to be undergone, is set forth by *outer darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth*, Matt. xxii. 13. Darkness, where shall be fruitless repentance, and endless wo, and no light to afford them the least comfort; darkness, attended with such hideous and intolerable pains, as shall force the miserable sufferers to wring their hands, and gnash their teeth for very anguish: and it is called *outer darkness*, because they shall be removed to the farthest distance from heaven, light, and happiness.

IN other places, the punishment is expressed by a *furnace of fire*, Matt. xiii. 50. by a *lake of fire and brimstone*, Rev. xix. 20. by *smoke*, Rev. xiv. 11. the most noisome and suffocating smoke, which is said to *ascend for ever and ever from the bottomless pit*; by *blackness and darkness*, Jude 13.

‘ There

‘ There a thick and more than *Egyptian*
‘ darkness, and most intense heat, shall
‘ reign together; but no mixture of light
‘ shall be allowed to the condemned pri-
‘ soners in their dismal dungeon, but only
‘ so much as may just help them to see
‘ the many hideous and doleful spectacles
‘ that do surround them every where:’ by
everlasting fire, Matt. xxv. 41. by *fire never*
to be quenched, Mark viii. 43. but *enduring*
for ever and ever, Rev. xiv. 11. Now what
can be more dreadful than fire; fire kind-
led by the wrath of an angry God, and
prepared by his almighty power, not to
consume and destroy the bodies of those
miserable wretches that shall be condemned
to dwell and suffer in it, but to torment
them, beyond all that the tongues of men
can now express, or their thoughts con-
ceive; without abatement, and without
ceasing for ever and ever?

By these we may make some judgment
of the grievousness of the punishment of
sinners in Hell.

BUT here some men may be apt to say,
that these cannot be true in a literal sense,
that

that there should be fire to burn souls, and torment them eternally. Now suppose it were so, yet if they do at all believe these threatnings, they must likewise believe, that some terrible thing is signified by everlasting burnings: and if fire and brimstone serve only for metaphors to describe these torments by, what will the real sufferings of the damned be? for the spirit of God does not use to describe things by such metaphors as are greater than the things themselves.

AND this may be said further, * That
 * if those should not be the very torments
 * of Hell, yet to be sure they shall be every
 * whit as dreadful, and as great as the ter-
 * rors of God's wrath (which ill men have
 * laid up in store for themselves) can af-
 * ford: and it is very probable they are of
 * that nature, and so great, as not to be
 * capable of being described by any thing
 * that we are now acquainted withal in this
 * world. For who knows the power of
 * God's anger? Who can imagine the
 * worst that almighty justice can do to sin-
 * ners? As the glory of heaven and the
 * joys

‘ joys of God’s presence are now inexplicable to us ; so likewise are the torments of Hell, and the miseries of the damned.’

Two sorts of punishments in Hell.

BUT this being only in general, it may not be amiss to consider a little more particularly, the two sorts of punishments, which sinners will certainly undergo in the other world. The one is called the punishment of loss, and the other the punishment they will verily and indeed feel; both extremely afflicting and tormenting to every lost soul ; beyond what we are now able (while we live in this world) fully to conceive or comprehend.

THE former I call the punishment of loss: for such certainly it will be, when those miserable and undone wretches shall come fully to perceive that they have lost, eternally lost heaven and happiness, and all the unspeakable and endless joys and glories of them, without a possibility of being ever admitted to them.

Of the punishment of loss in Hell.

IT is a thing common to all mankind, unless they be such as are most stupidly dull, and have no manner of concern for their own good and happiness, to be greatly afflicted and grieved when they have lost any great benefit and advantage, which they had reason to expect, and would in all probability have fallen to their share: or at least such as they might have been partakers of with some other of their friends. And still further, if the advantage was very considerable, and such as would have greatly contributed to the comfort and happiness of their being, all their whole lives afterwards; and such as all wise men would highly value: and especially if they had brought this loss upon themselves, by their own negligence and carelessness, or by their own imprudence and folly; and if moreover it were a loss which they could never have an opportunity of retrieving again, by all that they could do afterwards; I say, in such a case as this, how would they blame themselves for it, as long as they live, and
think

think themselves worthy to be justly condemned for it, by all sober and prudent persons, who should ever come to the knowledge of it?

AND yet even all this, and ten thousand times more, is infinitely short of what wicked men lose, when they forfeit their title to the eternal happiness of heaven, by their ungodly lives, and plunge themselves by them into eternal misery. The anguish and vexation of their souls, upon the account of such a loss, when they come to understand the full extent, and all the dismal consequences of it, will afflict and wound them as much, or more, than all the other torments together, which they shall endure in Hell, can do. For so, many wise and holy men have been of opinion, that the punishment of loss, in this case, will be greater than the punishment of sense; that is, that it will really be the occasion of a far greater grief, and more tormenting vexation, to them that suffer by it.

WICKED men perhaps, who have entirely given themselves up to a sensual course of life here, do by degrees become
so

so besotted by their lusts, that they will not think nor believe any other pleasures and delights equal to the gratification of them; these then may think the loss of heaven to be no such great punishment; but they will certainly hereafter have other thoughts of this loss, than they now have, when they come in good earnest to be sensible of it, that is, when they shall feel it to be a most heavy and insupportable punishment; and would give all the world, if they had it, (and it were in their power to retrieve it) to deliver themselves from all the evils that do attend it.

If such men would give themselves leave to reflect awhile, upon what our Saviour said to the unbelieving and impenitent *Jews*, that *there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when they shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of heaven, and themselves thrust out*, Luke xiii. 28. they would then be convinced, that the loss of heaven is not so inconsiderable a thing, as they now may vainly imagine, but a matter fit to excite the bitterest lamentations in all those, who shall

shall better understand and consider what they have lost.

MISERABLE, and forlorn creatures indeed, shall they fully perceive themselves to be, and shall be cut even to the very heart with the thoughts of it; when they shall hereafter have their eyes opened to see the great and transcendent excellency and desirableness of those glorious and eternal things, which they despised and rejected, when it was in their power to have obtained them, which now it is not. All the whole world cannot now purchase the recovery of them; for being once lost, they are lost for ever.

WHEN they shall come to consider, that they, who were intended by God to have been made the companions of angels and saints, in all the joys and felicities of heaven, if they would but have been persuaded to fear God, and keep his commandments; are now, for their impure, wicked, and unholy lives, banished for ever from all those regions of bliss and happiness above, to dwell for ever with the devil and his angels, and with the spirits of

men more wicked, if possible, than they are.

WHEN they shall come to consider further (as consider to be sure they will and must, when they have nothing else to divert them from it, but have their thoughts continually fixed upon this very thing) the happiness of heaven which they have lost; with what bitter indignation and rage will they then reflect upon themselves, for not having had a greater regard to the ministers of God's word, who were sent to acquaint them with the incomparable excellency of those things, and to tell them, that *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered unto the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,* 1 Cor. ii. 9. When, I say, they come to think with themselves, how foolish they were to choose the enjoyment of their base filthy lusts, and the mean pleasures of sin for a season (and that but a very short one too) above the eternal enjoyment of God and Christ, and of the blessed company of angels and saints, and of all the unutterable and inconceivable felicities of the other world.

AND

AND moreover still further, shall consider, that they should fall short of heaven, after they had perhaps made some considerable progress towards it, and upon many convictions of their former follies, wrought upon their minds by the secret but kindly workings of providence, had made many good purposes and resolutions of reforming their lives by a true repentance, and done many things towards the fulfilling of them; that they should after all this be so wanting to their own good, as to fall back again, and undo all that they had done well, by returning to their former vicious and ungodly courses again; and so should at last, for want of an honest and due christian perseverance in the ways of holiness, be shut out of heaven, and debarred for ever from the unspeakable joys of it; and must now have their portion with hypocrites and unbelievers in Hell, when they were once not far from the kingdom of G O D :

AND once more, that they should lose heaven irrecoverably; so as not to be put again into a possibility of salvation, nor obtain one hour to be allotted to them, in

order to their endeavouring to make their peace with God.

WHEN the thoughts of these things, I say, shall have taken such full possession of their minds, that they cannot possibly forget them, if they would never so fain, but they will with great quickness and vigour abide upon their minds continually; how deeply will these reflections pierce, and gall, and wound their very souls, and make them ready to tear themselves in pieces for anguish, if they could; but they cannot destroy themselves, nor put an end to their miserable beings, but must go on for ever, to deplore their misery, to curse their folly, and lament their loss?

FOR no consideration will, I imagine, sting the wicked more, nor add more to the rage of their torments, than this, that they did wickedly, when they understood how to have done better, or might have been taught to do so; but they wilfully chose rather to continue in ignorance, and would heedlessly run the hazard of being miserable for ever, rather than be at any pains to gain instruction how they might be happy for ever.

IN

IN short, nothing can nor will more torment them, than to remember what an inestimable blessing they have lost, in losing the favour and enjoyment of that God, who is the chiefest good, and of that happiness, which is so great as to pass all understanding; than to consider, that they have exchanged this exceeding and eternal weight of glory, for pleasures of a moment only, which are now vanished and gone, never to be seen, or felt, or enjoyed more: all that remains of them now, is only that corroding deadly sting, which they have left behind them. And more especially, how intolerably will it torment them to recollect (as it will be impossible for them not to recollect) all the calls and invitations they had to be happy; and even what importunity the great God of heaven used to bring them thither, and with what perverseness and obstinacy they resisted all those gracious offers, which are now hid for ever from their eyes?

THESE, and such like considerations, will fill their miserable souls with constant matter of self-tormenting reflection, never
to

to be appeased, and yet never, never to be avoided.

Of the actual punishment in Hell, which men will verily and indeed feel.

FROM the punishment of loss, I come now to consider those positive torments, which those miserable and undone wretches, who shall be condemned to this sad place of torment, shall feel on account of their sins, over and above what they shall suffer in the loss of heaven. These I have already mentioned in some degree, when I took notice of the descriptions and representations, by which the torments of the damned are set forth to us in the holy scriptures; which I shall not therefore repeat as you can so easily look back to them, and see what they are.* That which I shall add to them at present is this only, to make some few remarks upon the dreadful nature of them, as they are represented and figured to us in scripture.

AND first, there we are acquainted with the extremity of them, both with regard

* *Vid.* Page 273, 274, &c.

to the body, and with regard to the soul, the two parts which compose the whole man, as we shall be again, when our bodies and souls shall be united together again at the resurrection. There is no punishment besides, which we know of in this world, which, in the matter of torment to the body or the soul, can come up to the height of those punishments, which are threatned to the wicked and ungodly in Hell.

As first, to the body. Fire, we know, is the most active and most terrible thing in nature, and brimstone not only the most combustible, but also one of the most fierce and raging materials, wherewith it can be kindled, and heightened to the greatest degree. And by this terrible element it is said that the damned shall be punished. And still to add more fierceness to it, it is said, that *the breath of the Lord, as a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.* Nay, they shall be cast into it, to shew that their torments shall not only be sharp and dreadful, as that of burning, but also universal; every part of their body shall suffer in it, for they shall be cast into a lake of it, and shall be encompassed

compassed with it, and overwhelmed in the flames of it, wallowing in them, and not knowing which way it is possible to get out of them again, and clear themselves from them. And to shew how great a sense the wicked shall have of their sufferings by fire, the scripture describes those who are condemned to it, as *wailing and gnashing of teeth*, for the intolerable pains of it.

AND as to their souls, when the *worm that never dieth* shall be let loose upon them; when their own guilty consciences shall sting and torture them with furious reflections upon their former wickedness, and baseness, and ingratitude to that God, who would have saved them from those miseries, but they wilfully stopped their ears, and would not hearken to him; when those distracting terrors have once seized upon them, how far more miserable will they then be, than all the tyrants of the world could have made them, by exercising their most exquisite torments upon them? For no other terrors are equal to the torments of a guilty mind. *A wound-*
ed

ed spirit, who can bear it? Prov. xviii. 14.

But yet wicked souls must bear it, and undergo the painful effects of it for ever.

MOREOVER, it may be considered further, that when wicked, and rebellious, and ungrateful souls, are (by the divine indignation long provoked) shut up in that dismal place of torment, their vexations, passions, and reflections may be let loose upon them with more inexpressible violence, than they ever were or could possibly be in this world. For here our bodies of flesh do mightily obstruct and press down the soul in her operations: but when these are changed into spiritual bodies, as they will be there, their souls will then be able uncontrollably to exert their utmost powers; and by that means their apprehensions and resentments of things will necessarily become vastly more quick and vigorous; and consequently the sense of their own folly, guilt, and misery, and their remorse and anguish thereupon, will be rendered exceedingly more keen and sharp than ever they felt them before. And perhaps besides all this, who knows but the divine vengeance may still add new stings to the

inbred ones, and in some supernatural manner so whet and sharpen the points of those, that whereas in this world the consciences of wicked men did only chastize them with whips, in that which is to come, they will chastize them with scorpions?

FOR who knows how great the anger of GOD may be, when he is provoked to exert his utmost vengeance upon such monsters of ingratitude, who despised and rejected all his kind overtures of pardon, all his gracious offers of mercy to them, and would not be persuaded to return, and repent, and forsake all their wicked and ungodly courses, but would go on still to sin against him, altho' he condescended so far, as to send his own beloved Son from heaven, to call them to repentance, and to procure their pardon, by his own most bitter death and passion; but they shut their eyes, and stopped their ears, and would not take any notice of all his warnings and threats, but shamefully despised and slighted them all; and rather than not enjoy their sins, went on still wilfully and obstinately to offend him, though he had told them

them plainly over and over in his holy word, what would be the consequence of it, that they must expect then to be undone, and perish for ever.

SECONDLY, The torments wherewith the damned shall be punished, are said in the scriptures to be constant and uninterrupted, without the least intermission or abatement. *They have no rest day nor night*, Rev. xiv. 11. *They shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever*, chap. xx. 10. *They shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation*, chap. xiv. 10. No mixture of the faintest hopes, that it may one day (though at never so great a distance) be otherwise with them. No mixture of the least allay to alleviate the terrors of them. The rich man in the gospel, we know, was not allowed, with all his most earnest entreaties, the smallest refreshment, not so much as the tip of a finger dipped in water, afforded him to cool his tongue, and to assuage the bitter torments of it. The answer that was given him was only this; that *there was a great gulf fixed between him*, and not any one that could bring him even

the smallest comfort for his relief. There he must abide, and there he must endure whatever the long abused patience and mercy of a most highly incensed God had in perfect justice decreed him to suffer, for his uncharitableness and other vices, by way of punishment.

THIRDLY, One particular more the scriptures have declared to us, concerning their punishment; which puts the most direful sting of all into their torments, which is this, that they shall be endless. *Their worm never dieth, and the fire shall never be quenched,* Mark ix. 44. They must lie under the vengeance, the dreadful intolerable vengeance of fire, which shall never go out to all eternity. If the horrors of a guilty conscience, and the burnings of fire, were at all limited to any certain term of years, though at a very great distance; this would afford some relief, some small allay, to the sufferings of those distressed souls, that shall be condemned to the torments of Hell; but to be assured that they shall never have an end, for which they have the plain word of God; this is far worse than the sharpest tortures of all
the

the racks in the world, were it possible for one man to endure them all at once.

AND here now, for a clearer representation of the miseries of the damned, I shall crave leave to use the words of an excellent and learned divine, than which I think can hardly be found any more affecting to this purpose.

‘ SUPPOSE we then, says he, an innumerable company of self - condemned wretches confined in Hell, that direful place of torments, with a ready remembrance of all the abominable deeds of their former lives, with a clear perception of God, the fountain of blifs, and of those eternal joys in heaven, which they have lost, with a quick sense of the torments they suffer, and a sure prospect of their eternal duration and uninterrupted continuance; and then, consider what shame, and horror, and sad remorse; what rage, and fury, and wild despair, must alternately take possession of their mind, and make them break out into loud laments, and such fruitless wishes as these; Oh!

‘ that I had not given way to the spirit of

‘ lust and uncleanness, of luxury and wan-
 ‘ tonness, which betrayed me into innu-
 ‘ merable miscarriages in my life! Oh!
 ‘ that I had not followed the dictates of
 ‘ malice and revenge! Oh! that I had
 ‘ never defiled my lips with profane swear-
 ‘ ing, cursing, and blasphemy! Oh! that
 ‘ I had never been unmerciful and uncha-
 ‘ ritable, that I had never injured or op-
 ‘ pressed the poor, but had relieved their
 ‘ necessities, and made them partakers of
 ‘ my abundance! had I done this, and in-
 ‘ stead of pursuing criminal pleasures, made
 ‘ the salvation of my soul my care and
 ‘ study, I might now (instead of frying in
 ‘ these flames) have been in yonder bright
 ‘ and glorious mansions, singing praises
 ‘ and hallelujahs among the blessed saints,
 ‘ and with them communicating in those
 ‘ unspeakable pleasures, which are for ever
 ‘ to be felt in the presence and enjoyment
 ‘ of God and his Christ; but from thence
 ‘ I am eternally banished. The gulph,
 ‘ the mighty gulph, the decree, the irre-
 ‘ versible decree of an angry G O D, has
 ‘ made a separation, which can never be
 ‘ surmounted, and here must be thy sad
 ‘ abode:

‘ abode: these fiends must be thy compa-
‘ nions and tormentors: this fire the ele-
‘ ment wherein thou must live, and this
‘ worm must gnaw greedily upon thee for
‘ ever. O dreadful word, for ever! when
‘ ten thousand times ten thousand ages are
‘ past and gone, thy misery will be the
‘ same, and not a moment nearer its ex-
‘ piration! all the sufferings thou canst en-
‘ dure in an infinite succession of ages, will
‘ not appease the enraged deity, or incline
‘ him to relent. To recover his favour is
‘ a thing now impossible; and therefore
‘ farewell hope, and with hope farewell fear,
‘ farewell remorse; all good to me is lost;
‘ evil, be thou my good. And thus the
‘ wretched creature goes on, loading him-
‘ self with curses and execrations, envying
‘ and raging at the blessed above; reproach-
‘ ing and snarling at his fellow-sufferers in
‘ Hell; and as he reflects on his lost con-
‘ dition, and the unrelenting wrath of God,
‘ raging and blaspheming even against
‘ God himself. O sad estate, which turns
‘ every thing into poison, and will make
‘ the wretched curse the very fountain of
‘ happiness, thereby precluding all hopes

‘ of reconciliation, and perpetuating their
 ‘ punishment for ever !’

THESE are some of the sad ingredients which will constitute the Hell, and forlorn condition of the reprobates hereafter: a condition so very terrible, and full of horror, that it is almost impossible for any one to think of it without trembling. Oh! that every one who reads this, may be so wise and good, as to prevent it from being his own case, by leading a holy life, and truly repenting of all his sins, and so endeavouring to make his peace with God, before it be too late! *O consider this, all ye that forget God, lest he pluck you away and there be none to deliver you, Psalm l. 22.*

There shall be different degrees of punishment and misery in Hell.

THIRDLY, The third thing which I propose to shew on this subject is, that there shall be different degrees of punishment and misery in Hell, in proportion to the aggravations of mens iniquities in this world. Though the punishment of
 all

all wicked and ungodly men in the next world, will undoubtedly be very severe, yet we have the greatest reason to believe, that the punishment of some wicked men there, shall be far more severe than that of others. This is plainly intimated to us in many places of the holy scriptures.

THUS our Saviour threatens those who continue impenitent under the light of the gospel, with more heavy and dreadful punishments, than those who never enjoyed the light of it; where he tells the wicked inhabitants of *Capernaum*, *That it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, and for the men of Sodom and Gomorrah, at the day of judgment, than for that city*, Matt. xi. 22, 24. So likewise in another place he tells us, according to the degree of light and knowledge, which has been afforded to men in this world, shall be the degree of their torment in the next. *The servant that knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself to do according to it, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew it not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes*, St Luke xii. 47. And in general we are told, that the punishment

nishment of sinners shall receive its aggravation from the advantages and opportunities which men have neglected or abused in their lives. For *to whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more*, ver. 48. So likewise the apostle tells us, *Heb. ii. 2, 3.* that God will punish the contempt of the gospel more severely than that of the law of Moses. *If the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?* And chap. x. 28, 29. *if he that despised Moses's law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses, of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?*

MOREOVER, we cannot but conclude that thus it will be, both from the consideration of the divine justice, and also from the nature of the thing.

FROM the former, we may be well assured, that GOD, who is privy to all the thoughts

thoughts and actions of every man, tho' committed with never so much secrecy, and who perfectly knows how to distinguish between different degrees of wickedness; and is likewise abundantly able to punish every sinner according to his desert, will in the future state proportion the torment according to every man's guilt, and inflict such punishment on every sinner, as his particular offences shall deserve.

AND in the nature of the thing, it cannot well be otherwise, even though the divine justice should not interpose. For where the greatest guilt is, there will of necessity be the greatest remorse, and so the greatest vexation and punishment from the sense of it.

WHILST wicked men indeed continue in this world, they find out a great many ways to divert the reproaches of their guilty consciences. They are sometimes so eagerly intent upon other things, that they will not attend to them; or perhaps, when they feel their clamours begin to grow very uneasy to them, they are willing to lull them asleep, by crying, Peace, peace; and are apt to deceive themselves with

with fruitless resolutions of a future repentance and reformation, some time hence; and then hope that all will be well at last. But when they are once passed into another world, and their thoughts are all awake, without any thing possible to divert them; when all their vain imaginations shall be confuted, and their hopes of reformation at an end; then the intenseness of their torments will make them feel the terrors of them, whether they will or no; and will with fury urge upon them the mortifying considerations of their own folly and madness: ‘ how they wilfully stopped their ears to all God’s gracious calls and invitations to repentance, and presumptuously neglected all the means of grace that were offered to them; and obstinately resisted all the good motions of the spirit of G O D upon their Souls; and scandalously pursued all their irregular passions and inclinations, to the dishonour of God, their great Creator and benefactor, and their blessed Saviour, who came into the world to die for them, and to redeem them with his most precious blood. All which they regarded not at all,

‘ all, but preferred the gratification of their
‘ vile lusts, before all the great obligations
‘ which their God and Saviour had laid
‘ upon them, to serve and obey him in
‘ righteousness, and holiness of life : how
‘ I say, in such cases as these, can it be
‘ otherwise, but that the reflection upon
‘ their own past egregious folly and ingra-
‘ titude, must needs sit the more heavily
‘ upon their souls, and wound them the
‘ more deeply, and torment them the more
‘ grievously, in proportion to the aggrava-
‘ tions of their ingratitude towards God,
‘ and of the folly which they have been
‘ guilty of towards themselves? By these
‘ means, as the apostle says, *Rom. ii. 5.*
‘ *They must needs treasure up unto themselves*
‘ *wrath against the day of wrath, and the*
‘ *revelation of the righteous judgment of God;*
‘ and pile up more fuel for everlasting
‘ burnings. For since the torments of
‘ Hell are in scripture compared to fire;
‘ the more fuel, and the greater store of
‘ combustible matter is cast into it, the
‘ more fierce and raging must it needs be.’

It might perhaps have been expected,
that I should here have added something
more

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more particularly, for the more evident proof of the certainty of the eternity of Hell torments; but this being one of the deep counsels and unsearchable judgments of God, which we blind, ignorant, and shallow creatures, are not sufficiently qualified fully to fathom and comprehend; after so many plain declarations and descriptions made of it in scripture expressions, which are severe enough, one would think, to deter any considerate person, from wilfully exposing himself to the danger of such dreadful misery, as is threatened by them to wicked men; I shall choose rather to omit saying any thing farther of it in this place; and shall only observe, that how inconceivable soever the eternity of Hell torments may now be to us; there is a time coming when the incomprehensible wisdom, impartial justice, and inexhaustible goodness of God, in all his dispensations and judiciary proceedings with the sons of men, shall shine forth to all the world, and be as clear as the light; so that both angels and men shall see them, and be forced to acknowledge and approve them,

them, and to adore God for them; saying, as the church doth upon occasion of the judgments inflicted on *Babylon*, Rev. xix. 1, 2. *Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God, for true and righteous are his judgments.*

What useful lessons the consideration of these things does naturally suggest to us.

NOW all these things being well considered, do naturally suggest many useful lessons to us; some of which I shall crave leave to add in the last place, by way of application to the whole, and with them to conclude.

As first, We are hereby informed of the heinous nature of sin, and God's high displeasure against it. Whoever observes the careless behaviour of the generality of mankind, with regard to sin; how easily they are tempted to the commission of it, and how little concern they are apt to express for it, after they have been guilty of it; must needs conclude, that they look upon
it

it as a slight trifling thing, and not worth a man's giving himself any uneasiness about it; but he may indulge himself freely in the commission of it, whenever he perceives it to be any way conducing to his profit or his pleasure to do so. But whatever mens thoughts may be of it, it is certain that the most wise and righteous God, who can best judge of the true nature of things, has quite another opinion of it, and does not think it so slight and indifferent a matter, as men are apt to do.

FOR if he did, it would be utterly unconceivable, why he should every where, in his holy word, declare such a settled abhorrence and detestation of it, as we know he has done; and not only threaten, and even execute such heavy judgments on the workers of iniquity, as he has often done in this world; but should also denounce the severest punishments, such as fire and brimstone, fire unquenchable, lakes of fire, everlasting fire, and the like, to be the certain portion of all wicked and ungodly, and profane, and impenitent finners in the next world: torments so great and so intolerable,

ble, as are beyond the power of mortals to conceive the ten thousandth part of them; and yet to add to the dreadfulnes of them, he has moreover declared, that they shall be eternal; that is, never, never to have an end.

‘ O THAT men therefore who know
‘ themselves to be prone to any kind of
‘ sin, would sometimes seriously weigh with
‘ themselves the abominable nature of it;
‘ and when they are tempted by their idle
‘ companions, or their own vile and base
‘ lusts, to the commission of it, would
‘ presently reflect with themselves, and
‘ say, as pious *Joseph* did, *Gen. xxxix. 9.*
‘ *How can I do this great wickedness, and sin*
‘ *against God?* how can I be such a fool,
‘ to provoke the anger and hatred of the
‘ most just and righteous Judge of the
‘ world against me; who, if he should not
‘ punish me for it in this world, as I shall
‘ deserve, will yet most certainly condemn
‘ me to everlasting misery for it in that
‘ which is to come; when I shall find that
‘ most sadly true, which is declared in his
‘ most holy word, that *it is a most fearful*
D d ‘ *thing*

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‘ *thing to fall into the hands of the living*
‘ *God? Heb. x. 31.*’

SECONDLY, The consideration of the abominable nature of sin, and of God’s utter hatred and abhorrence of it, and of the most terrible punishments which he has threatned to it; do all help to give us the most astonishing instance of GOD’s wonderful love and mercy to sinners, in the pardon of their sins, upon their true and sincere repentance for them.

‘ WHEN GOD pardons the sinner, he
‘ condescends to be perfectly reconciled to
‘ him, and to take him again into his fa-
‘ vour, and to treat him as kindly as if
‘ he had never offended him at all. The
‘ great Creator of mankind, is so much
‘ concerned for the good of his creatures,
‘ that when they forget their duty to him,
‘ and do heedlessly run into such foolish
‘ courses, as he certainly knows would be
‘ destructive to them; yet he takes pity
‘ on them, and is uneasy at it, as it were,
‘ till they return to him again; and calls
‘ upon them most earnestly, by the inward
‘ workings of his grace, and the outward
‘ dispens-

‘ dispensations of his providence, to be-
‘ think themselves what they are doing,
‘ and consider whither their evil courses
‘ will lead them, if they do not timely re-
‘ solve to change them for others that are
‘ more innocent and virtuous; bespeak-
‘ ing them, as he did his rebellious people
‘ the *Jews*, saying, *O that they were wise,*
‘ *that they would understand this, that they*
‘ *would consider their latter end!* Deut.
‘ xxxii. 29.’

H E addressees himself often to their thoughts, in the most tender manner, saying, *Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; call upon him, while he is near. Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to his God, for he will abundantly pardon,* *Isaiah* lv. 6, 7. ‘ And by these
‘ God gives the strongest demonstrations
‘ to sinners, how far he is from being de-
‘ sirous, that they should perish everlast-
‘ ingly; but that he had abundantly ra-
‘ ther, that they should repent and turn
‘ from their evil ways; that he might bless
‘ them in this world, and that they might

‘ be happy with him for ever in the next.’ And for that very reason it is, that he has made known to the sons of men those terrible judgments, which he has ordained should be inflicted upon obstinate and impenitent sinners in the world to come ; on purpose, if possible, that being affrighted with them, they might be persuaded, and even forced, as it were, to repent of all their abominations, to change their lives, to fear God, and to keep his commandments, that they *may be delivered from the wrath to come.*

To this purpose, he expresses himself, *Ezek. xxxiii. 11. As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die?* Thus also he declares of himself, *Isaiah xliii. 25. I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins: and chap. xlv. 22. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins. Return unto me.*

EARTHLV

EARTHLY princes do sometimes vouchsafe to pardon rebels and traitors, and to excuse the punishment which they have deserved; but seldom do they, after that, admit them again to especial marks of their favour. But the all-merciful God, vouchsafes not only to shew his compassion to them whom he pardons, on account of their true repentance; but he again from thenceforth accounts them his children, and dignifies them with all the privileges of his children. He bestows grace and glory on them, and no good thing does he withhold from them, but advanceth them even to the honour of being heirs of that kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him. ‘ O admirable loving-kindness! who would not be heartily
‘ sorry for what he has done amiss, in offending so gracious a God? Who would
‘ not repent himself heartily of all his former provocations, when he considers,
‘ that he who has power to destroy him,
‘ both soul and body for ever in Hell for them, does not presently cut him off in
‘ his sins, which have deserved his utmost
‘ indignation against him for them, but is
‘ long-

‘ long-suffering to him, and waits a long
 ‘ time, day after day, to be gracious to
 ‘ him; to see whether he will bethink him-
 ‘ self, and leave off acting so foolishly,
 ‘ that he may admit him, upon his true
 ‘ repentance, to an entire pardon for them
 ‘ all, and receive him into his everlasting
 ‘ favour, as if he had never offended him
 ‘ at all; that so he may dwell with him
 ‘ and all his holy angels and saints, in end-
 ‘ less bliss and happiness for evermore, in-
 ‘ stead of being ruined and undone to all
 ‘ eternity?’ But if after all, they will not
 be persuaded to repent, nor amend their
 evil ways, they must thank themselves,
 and themselves only, for the dreadful mi-
 series which they bring upon themselves
 by their obstinate impenitency.

THIRDLY, The consideration of the abo-
 minable nature of sin, and of the dreadful
 miseries to which we are exposed by it
 hereafter, should raise in us the highest
 esteem and love for our Saviour Christ,
 who came into the world *to save us from*
our sins, Matt. i. 21. to deliver us from the
wrath to come, 1 Thess. i. 10. to be a pro-
pitiation for our sins, 1 John iv. 10. by his
 death

death to satisfy the justice of GOD, and make reconciliation for iniquity, Dan. ix. 24. who hath redeemed us by his blood, out of every kingdom, and tongue, and people, and nation, Rev. v. 9. For he it was, who being the eternal Son of GOD, did vouchsafe to come down from heaven, and to humble himself so low, as to take our mean nature upon him, that by shedding forth his most precious blood upon the cross for us, he might make atonement thereby for the sins of all the whole world; and procure peace, and pardon, and salvation from his Father, for all those who should truly repent of their sins, and should afterward endeavour to lead holy lives, suitable to those holy doctrines which he taught us while he was here on earth. He it was who rescued us from Hell, and from those everlasting burnings, which without him must have been the portion of all wicked men for ever. For *there is no salvation in any other but Christ, neither is there any other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*, Acts iv. 12.

‘ How highly therefore should we prize
‘ him, accounting all things but loss and dung
‘ for

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‘ *for the excellency of the knowledge of him?*

‘ Phil. iii. 8. How entirely should we

‘ love him, who has given us such de-

‘ monstration of his unspeakable love to

‘ us? How chearfully should we always

‘ resign up ourselves with a dutiful obedi-

‘ ence to all his laws, who hath done and

‘ suffered so much, to rescue us from the

‘ slavery of the devil, to reconcile his of-

‘ fended Father to sinful men, and so to

‘ deliver us from eternal damnation?

‘ How should we delight to sing forth his

‘ praises here on earth, and invite all others

‘ to join with us in them, who when he

‘ had overcome the sharpness of death, did

‘ open the kingdom of heaven to all be-

‘ lievers: and is now *preparing a place for*

‘ *us in those blessed mansions above, that where*

‘ *he is, there may we be also?*”

FOURTHLY, The consideration of the dreadful miseries which G O D hath ordained and threatned to be the portion of all impenitent sinners in the next world, does inform us, how greatly we are concerned to seek for the pardon of our sins, and to set about it immediately, that we may never

ver be condemned to those dismal regions of horror and despair, which he has appointed for the wicked; of horror, on account of the dreadful things that are there to be endured: and of despair, on account of being never like to be delivered from them any more.

‘ COULD I represent to you those wretched prisons, into which wicked, and impenitent, and impure souls shall be thrust at the last day, and the miseries they shall there endure, being subject to the insolent scorn and cruelty of devils; the severe lashes, and raging anguish of their own minds, without any kind of comfort or hope, without intermission, without pity, and abandoned to absolute despair; could I represent these things to you, in their true and proper light, you would not be able to hear, for one moment (without trembling and astonishment) the least part of what those miserable wretches shall be condemned to endure for ever.’

AND that you may never know them by experience, be persuaded, I earnestly

entreat you, to make all the haste you possibly can, to repent of all your known sins. Do not, I beseech you, deceive yourselves with any vain hopes, that you may safely indulge yourselves a while longer in your sins, which are so pleasant to you: and that you may have time enough to repent of them afterwards, when, by reason of old age, you cannot taste the pleasures of them, as you have formerly done.

KEEP it always in your minds, and reflect often very seriously upon it, that this life is a very uncertain thing, and put not off your repentance from day to day, for you know not what a day may bring forth.

- ‘ Have not you often known others, who
- ‘ seemed to be in as perfect a state of health
- ‘ as you now are, before the next morning
- ‘ light, seized with death, and called away
- ‘ out of this world, to give an account to
- ‘ GOD of all their actions, and perhaps
- ‘ without having so much warning to prepare themselves for death, as to say,
- “ Lord have mercy upon us;” to be sure
- ‘ not to have time enough solemnly to repent of all their sins, and to make their
- ‘ peace

‘ peace with GOD; as is often the case of
‘ those who are seized with apoplexies, or
‘ struck with dead palsies; in which cases,
‘ if it would save their souls to ask GOD’s
‘ pardon for their sins, they could not do
‘ it? And how knowest thou, O man,
‘ that this shall not be thy own fate?’

WHEREFORE, by all means, be wise now
thou mayest, and lay hold of the present
opportunity to repent, while GOD allows
you time for it. You may make your ad-
vantage of the present time; but if that
be neglected and slip away, no man can as-
sure you what may happen before another
day comes. And if you have not time to
repent fully and in good earnest, think what
a dreadful condition you must needs then
be in, when your soul shall be required of
you, and you shall all of a sudden be deli-
vered over to endure those dreadful things
which I have just above mentioned.

‘ ARE you not every day and hour,
‘ while you continue impenitent, in dan-
‘ ger of dropping into the unquenchable
‘ flames of that lake which burns with fire
‘ and brimstone? And can you then find

entreat you, to make all the haste you possibly can, to repent of all your known sins. Do not, I beseech you, deceive yourselves with any vain hopes, that you may safely indulge yourselves a while longer in your sins, which are so pleasant to you: and that you may have time enough to repent of them afterwards, when, by reason of old age, you cannot taste the pleasures of them, as you have formerly done.

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‘ peace with GOD ; as is often the case of
‘ those who are seized with apoplexies, or
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‘ pardon for their sins, they could not do
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which I have just above mentioned.

‘ ARE you not every day and hour,
‘ while you continue impenitent, in dan-
‘ ger of dropping into the unquenchable
‘ flames of that lake which burns with fire
‘ and brimstone ? And can you then find

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‘ in your heart, while you are in such danger, to dally, and sport, and play, and trifle away your precious time; oh do not act, I beseech you, as if your inward thoughts were, that there are neither rewards nor punishments, that there is neither Heaven nor Hell, after this life; and that all the reports which the scriptures have given us of endless happiness for good souls hereafter, and of unutterable endless torments for the wicked, do all signify nothing, and deserve no more credit with us than a popish legend.’

IF any one offers to persuade you to think on this manner, hearken not to him, and believe him not; he can mean no good to you, but great evil by it. He can certainly be no other than one of the devil’s agents, employed by him to put into mens minds such wicked thoughts, on purpose to destroy their souls, and to delude them to their utter ruin. But GOD and his Son Jesus Christ will never deceive you; what they have informed you of, you may depend upon it is infallibly true, as you will find afterwards.

‘ IF

‘ If you are good, and do endeavour
‘ with all your heart to live in the fear of
‘ God, and to keep his commandments;
‘ if you diligently exercise yourself, *to have*
‘ *a conscience void of offence, both towards*
‘ *God and towards man*; you will certainly
‘ find, that G O D will not only love, and
‘ prosper, and bless you with his favour in
‘ this world, but will also bring you to
‘ everlasting happiness hereafter: but if
‘ you will presumptuously follow a multi-
‘ tude to do evil, and will go on to pollute
‘ and defile yourself daily with sin, which
‘ is so hateful to G O D, and so lothesome
‘ in his pure eyes, you will thereby not
‘ only render yourself the object of G O D’s
‘ fierce wrath and displeasure in this world,
‘ but also expose yourself to his fiery in-
‘ dignation in the next for ever.’

LASTLY, If eternal death be the punish-
ment ordained for sin, and it will (without
repentance) inevitably bring upon the sin-
ner those everlasting torments in another
world, the misery whereof no tongue can
express; this consideration should excite us
not only to avoid all sin ourselves, but also

to use our best endeavours to hinder it, and stop the course of it, as much as we can, in others. We usually account it a great piece of wickedness to be hard-hearted and cruel to the bodies of men; to maim and hurt them in so egregious a manner, as may render their lives uneasy to them as long as they live. But this is vastly short of that wickedness, which they are guilty of, who endeavour to corrupt and pervert others; who tempt and seduce them into the ways of sin; which is, as much as in them lies, to bring upon them eternal destruction both of soul and body, and so make them miserable for ever.

THIS should be well considered by those, who make it their business to debauch and seduce them with whom they converse.

‘ How will they be able hereafter, to answer it to God and their own consciences, and to those unhappy wretches, whom they have helped to betray into eternal ruin, by their continual enticements to sin? What excuse will they be able to make, when they shall be charged with endeavouring to tempt and entice their innocent brethren to intemperance, to lewdness,

‘ lewdness, to theft, to lying and swear-
‘ ing, or to any other sins, which God
‘ has often declared are so highly provok-
‘ ing and displeasing to him? How will
‘ they then be able to silence the bitter re-
‘ proaches of their own consciences, which
‘ they once endeavoured to lull into sleep;
‘ but they will be awakened by the tor-
‘ ments they shall then feel, and which will
‘ then tell them, what numberless checks
‘ they offered to give them, against such
‘ and such abominable practices, as they
‘ were about to lead others into, but they
‘ would not hearken to them; being ut-
‘ terly regardless of God’s honour, and
‘ their brother’s good? What answer will
‘ they be able to return to their wicked
‘ companions themselves, when they shall
‘ upbraid them with tempting them to be
‘ partakers with them in their follies, which
‘ they had never been guilty of, but thro’
‘ their bewitching persuasions and entice-
‘ ments, which they abhorred before they
‘ became acquainted with them: and might
‘ have lived and died in innocence, and
‘ been happy, as other good men, and

‘ many of their own relations, friends, and
‘ neighbours now are, in the blessed regions
‘ above; had it not been for them, who
‘ betrayed them into sin first, and then
‘ prevailed with them to continue in it?
‘ whereas they must now live together
‘ with them in everlasting flames, and
‘ never, never see the end of them!’

‘ AND oh! how will they who joined,
‘ while alive, in their riotings and revel-
‘ lings, in wanton amours, loud laughers,
‘ and mad frolics, now bear to be joined
‘ in weeping and wailing, in loud shrieks,
‘ and dismal groans, and sore lamentations?
‘ What dire upbraidings and curses will
‘ they breathe out one against another, for
‘ drawing one, another into that detested
‘ place, where their souls shall be distract-
‘ ed with the severity of their torments,
‘ and their bodies lie wallowing in fire,
‘ without one minute’s refreshment allow-
‘ ed them, no not so much as of one drop
‘ of water to cool their tongues! Oh!
‘ how will they wish ten thousand times
‘ over afterward, that they had been wiser,
‘ and had done otherwise, and avoided the
‘ company

‘ company of such reprobates, as they now
‘ plainly see they were, who persuaded
‘ them to offend GOD by their wicked
‘ lives, and must now bear them company
‘ in enduring the vengeance of eternal fire !
‘ Oh! what good men would they resolve
‘ to be for the future ! what continual fear
‘ would they live in of offending God af-
‘ terwards ! what would they do; nay,
‘ what would they not do, that should be
‘ pleasing to him, if their peace could but
‘ once be made with him ? But alas ! it
‘ cannot be, they have missed their time
‘ for repentance and amendment ; all op-
‘ portunities for that are now lost, and
‘ gone, and at an end with their lives :
‘ here must they dwell with accursed spi-
‘ rits, and be miserable with them for
‘ ever.’

The CONCLUSION.

OH ! that men therefore would be now
so wise, while they are in health, and
have time for it, as to consider seriously
beforehand, what the dismal consequence
will

will be, of indulging themselves in all manner of sin and licentiousness, and of enticing and encouraging others to do the same! let them call themselves often most seriously to an account for their past actions; and where they find themselves to have been guilty of any thing of this nature, let them truly humble themselves before G O D for it, and with all their souls earnestly implore his pardon for what they have done, and immediately endeavour to change the course of their lives, that so by their after behaviour, they may make all the amends they possibly can to those they have injured, and beg G O D's pardon for them, as well as for themselves; and most earnestly beseech him to give them all grace, to reform and amend their wicked ways; that they may never come into that dreadful place, ordained for ungodly and impenitent sinners. And who knows, but that (if they will do thus, and be sincere now in their repentance) the God of infinite compassion may take pity on them, in their forlorn condition, and *for the infinite merits of his dear Son our Saviour Jesus Christ*, may receive them to mercy, and admit

admit them among other true penitents, to be partakers of that happiness, which he has prepared for his faithful servants hereafter in heaven ; that they may there together with them rejoice with exceeding joy, and sing praises to G O D the Father, and their blessed Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit, thee persons, but one God, with all the holy angels and saints, for ever.

A Prayer to be delivered from the torments of Hell.

O Eternal and most gracious Father, who hast declared in thy holy word, that thou desirest not the death of a sinner, but that he should rather repent and turn from his sins and be saved ; and for that end hast encouraged us, to come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may find mercy in the time of need : O do thou vouchsafe to hear the prayers and cries of me thy sinful creature, who do most earnestly implore thy mercy in the pardon of all my sins, for the sake of thy dear Son, and my dear redeemer Jesus Christ, who
suffered

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suffered and died once a most bitter death upon the cross, that we might not die and suffer eternally. *Amen, Amen.*

O G O D, the Father of heaven, have mercy upon me a miserable sinner; and from thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation, good Lord deliver me.

Another.

O Almighty G O D, the creator and maker of all men, and who hast in thy great wisdom placed us here in this world between an infinite eternity of happiness and misery, in a capacity of obtaining the one, and in danger of incurring the other; give me, I most humbly beseech thee, the Spirit of wisdom from above, to discern the vast disproportion there is between the short moment of this present time, and the infinite duration of eternity; between the pleasures which are at thy right hand for evermore, and the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season. O let the transcendent excellency of the heavenly joy which is set before me, inspire me with such vigour and alacrity in the ways of
godliness,

godliness, that whatever difficulties there may be in them at present, I may not be discouraged from walking stedfastly in them; but being assisted by the grace of thy Holy Spirit, may with a holy resolution and faithfulness press forward, till thro' thy abundant mercy and goodness, and the infinite merits of my Saviour, I do attain it. And moreover, for a greater security of it, let the frequent meditation of Hell, and the unspeakable miseries of it, which thou hast threatened to the wicked and ungodly, be a powerful preservative to deter me from all ways leading to that dreadful place. That so when thou shalt be pleased to call me out of this world, I may depart in peace, and be prepared to partake with thee, and all thy holy angels and saints, in the joys of thy everlasting kingdom. *Amen.*



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